



Wisconsin  
Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission  
2023-2024 Biennial Report to the Governor  
and Legislature

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## Introduction

The Governor’s Juvenile Justice Commission (GJJC) submits this report with support from the Wisconsin Department of Justice (WI DOJ) as required by 34 U.S.C. 11133(a)(3)(D)(ii) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDA). The JJDA states that the advisory group “shall...submit to the chief executive officer and the legislature of the State at least every 2 years a report and necessary recommendations regarding State compliance with the core requirements” of the Act.

Governor Tony Evers created the GJJC through [Executive Order #43](#) to serve as the State Advisory Group (SAG) designated under the JJDA. WI DOJ serves as the Designated State Agency. The GJJC supports the WI DOJ with maintaining compliance with the core requirements of the JJDA, administering federal Title II, Part B, Formula Grant funds, and advising the Governor and State Legislature on juvenile justice policy.

## Governor’s Juvenile Justice Commission Background and Duties

### Vision, Mission, and Strategy

#### Vision

The GJJC envisions a state in which all youth and families are safe, healthy, educated, supported equitably, and provided opportunities to achieve their full potential.

#### Mission

The GJJC strives to positively impact youth and families through a racial justice lens by promoting front-end reforms that prevent youth from becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. This will be accomplished through trauma and evidence-informed interventions that invest in families, schools, and diversion-focused community-based programs.

#### Strategy

The GJJC will utilize state and local partnerships, in conjunction with meaningful engagement with youth and families, to enhance collaboration within the juvenile justice system. The GJJC will leverage state and federal resources and funding to support local jurisdictions and organizations to accomplish the goals of the three-year plan, as required by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), while providing leadership and expertise to Wisconsin residents, state agencies, policy makers, and the Governor on juvenile justice matters.

### JJDA Responsibilities

The JJDA designates several specific duties to the State Advisory Group—the Governor’s Juvenile Justice Commission. These responsibilities include the following:

- General administration of a commission by meeting regularly, managing the budget, evaluating the effectiveness of actions, maintaining attendance and participation, and working with the Governor and WI DOJ to keep membership current and active.

- Advise WI DOJ on JJDPA compliance, Title II grant funding administration, and three-year strategic planning. The GJJC develops and reviews the state’s Three-Year Strategic Plan. The GJJC consults with local government and youth when developing their strategic plan.
- Review and comment on Title II subgrant applications and monitor funded programs.
- Submit a report to the Governor and Legislature including necessary recommendations regarding state compliance with the core requirements.
- Obtain input from youth currently under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system.
- Share updates regarding GJJC actions and recommendations to other state-level taskforces, commissions, or committees on juvenile justice and delinquency prevention efforts.

### Executive Order Responsibilities

In addition to fulfilling all SAG responsibilities as described in the JJDPA, the Governor tasked the GJJC with developing recommendations for the following:

- “A process for assessing youth pre-disposition to ensure that each youth is receiving the most beneficial programming in the setting best suited to his or her needs.
- Creating a state-wide unified treatment-centered system of juvenile justice that minimizes disruptions to youth who go through multiple types of placements.
- Innovations and best practices Wisconsin should adopt across the entire spectrum of the juvenile justice system, including but not limited to non-secure treatment and intervention options.
- Identifying and reducing racial disparities in the juvenile justice system.
- Identifying gaps in data collection and analysis in the juvenile justice system, including data on “dual-status” youth who are involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.”<sup>1</sup>

### Subcommittees and Workgroups

#### Executive Subcommittee

The Executive Subcommittee is comprised of the GJJC Chair, Vice Chair, and the Subcommittee Chairs. The Executive Subcommittee is responsible for setting the agenda for full Commission meetings. It is authorized to act on behalf of the GJJC for specific purposes or in emergency situations. The Executive Subcommittee provides oversight of the collective work of all the subcommittees, workgroups, and full commission.

#### Ethnic and Racial Disparities Subcommittee

The Ethnic and Racial Disparities (ERD) Subcommittee is responsible for state compliance with the JJDPA and EO requirement to identify and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in Wisconsin’s juvenile justice system. The subcommittee reviews and approves racial and ethnic disparity data, develops

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<sup>1</sup> Item 6a-6e of EO #43, <https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/EO/EO043-GJJC.pdf>.

and implements a reduction plan, and partners with locals on efforts to reduce disparities. The data covers contact points including arrest, diversion, pre-trial detention, secure confinement, and transfers to adult court.

#### Policy, Legislation, and Compliance Subcommittee

The Policy, Legislation, and Compliance (PLC) Subcommittee is responsible for addressing the core requirements of the JJDPA related to youth treatment in secure facilities. The subcommittee weighs in on policy and legislative changes necessary to maintain compliance with the JJDPA and improve outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system. PLC members monitor state legislative and regulatory changes that may impact Wisconsin's compliance with the JJDPA or the functioning of the juvenile justice system. The subcommittee develops policy recommendations for full-commission approval.

#### Youth Voice Commission

The Youth Voice Commission (YVC) is a workgroup and is responsible for recruiting and training youth and young adults for membership on the GJJC. YVC members lead initiatives including contacting and seeking regular input from youth currently under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system. The YVC translates that input into recommendations to the GJJC for Title II funding priorities and strategic plan goals and objectives.

#### Grants Workgroup

The Grants Workgroup is made up of GJJC members with experience and training in grants administration. The workgroup is responsible for working with WI DOJ staff to review and comment on all applications to Title II subgrant opportunities. All members uphold the code of ethics for public officials and adhere to all confidentiality, conflict of interest, and fair and impartial grant scoring procedures. The workgroup members provide individual reviews of each application and collectively recommend awards to the Attorney General for final decisions.

### Wisconsin Department of Justice Responsibilities

#### JJDPA Responsibilities

As the Designated State Agency under the JJDPA, WI DOJ is responsible for comprehensive juvenile justice planning and policy development. DOJ staff monitor secure facilities for compliance with the requirements of the JJDPA. DOJ staff administer Title II Formula Grants Program funding, provide support for the State Advisory Group, and partner with the GJJC to draft and submit a three-year plan and annual evidence showing that the state complies with all 33 statutory requirements and core requirements of the JJDPA.

## Report

### Governor’s Juvenile Justice Commission Updates and Strategic Plan

#### Chair’s Report: Diane Rondini

During 2023-2024 the GJJC continued its vision for the state of Wisconsin as “a state in which all youth and families are safe, healthy, educated, supported equitably, and provided opportunities to achieve their full potential.”

To this end, the GJJC and subcommittees met regularly to promote both policy and legislative reform as well as to call attention to racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

The GJJC supported multiple juvenile justice reforms included in the Governor’s 2023-2025 budget as well as bipartisan legislation that recognized children are not little adults. Highlights included: raising both the minimum and maximum age for juvenile court jurisdiction, reforming automatic adult court jurisdiction, modifying juvenile life without parole and supporting Safe Harbor legislation. Further, the GJJC remained committed to the current statutory provisions derived from legislation enacted in 2017 that codified the closing of Lincoln Hills School and Copper Lake School by January 2021.

Although Wisconsin has made many gains in supporting its youth, more work is needed to ensure that all children and their families, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, or geographic location are acknowledged, supported, and provided opportunities to succeed.

#### Vice Chair’s Report: Aidan Raney

Over the past two years, the GJJC has made great strides in incorporating the voices of youth, specifically youth with experience within our juvenile justice system, into the commission. Under the JJDPA, the GJJC must maintain a certain number of justice-involved and youth commissioners. We often recruit these members from the Youth Voice Commission (YVC). Improving retention to the YVC is important to remain in compliance with the JJDPA.

In 2024, to improve retention, we increased YVC members’ stipends to \$25/hour, added an additional monthly meeting that provides networking and training opportunities, and are encouraging members to get more involved in the wider GJJC by attending meetings as members of the public. The YVC also began working on a Youth Outreach Project that will give youth currently in our juvenile justice system the opportunity to contribute their perspective to the GJJC. The outreach project will provide valuable qualitative data derived from the voices of incarcerated youth. The data will be released in a public report and will help inform GJJC commissioners in their decision making and recommendations.

As we look to the next two years my priorities are clear: improve access to impactful and proven facilities like the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center (MJTC) and GROW Academy, improve the continuum of care after youth leave juvenile detention centers and state facilities like the MJTC, and continue producing actionable data from the voices of justice-involved youth to empower decision making. Much progress has been made in juvenile justice reform in Wisconsin, but there is still much to do.

### GJJC Activities

The entire GJJC meets quarterly, and each subcommittee meets five to six times per year. In the last two years, the members of the Governor’s Juvenile Justice Commission attended two site visits and hosted one hybrid and one fully in-person quarterly meeting.



*Figure 1: August 2023, GJJC members hosted a hybrid quarterly meeting at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Schools in Lincoln County, Wisconsin. From left: Carl Ashley, Lara Kenny, Matt Allord, Sabrina Gentile, Edjron Pearson, Kiley Komro, Dorinthia Robinson, Sharten Moore.*



*Figure 2: The GJJC hosted their November 2023 quarterly meeting in person in Madison Wisconsin. Back row from left: Ben Goring, Diane Rondini, Sharten Moore, Edjron Pearson, Dana Brown, Ron Hermes, Dorinthia Robinson. Front row from left: Lesley Baird Chapin, Kenna Tripple, Andrew Miller, John (JP) Rotatori, Abigail (Abbie) Gosetti.*



*Figure 3: GJJC members visited the newly renovated and expanded Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center in August 2024. From left: Emilie Amundson, Jared Hoy, Sharlen Moore, Aidan Raney, Meaghan Henry, Dana Brown.*

### *Three-Year Plan: Priorities, Goals, and Objectives*

2023 concluded the last year of the 2021-2023 Title II Three-Year Plan cycle and began preparations and data analysis for the new 2024-2026 Title II Three-Year Plan. The GJJC set six priorities in the 2021-2023 Three-Year Plan: 1) Maintain compliance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJCPA); 2) Promote policy and legislative improvements to the juvenile justice system; 3) Reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system; 4) Promote youth, family, and community engagement in the work of the GJJC; 5) Improve data collection; and 6) Administer grant programs. As of 2023, Wisconsin has made progress towards each of these goals.

One significant achievement was the creation of the Youth Voice Commission in February 2023. The YVC was developed to address persistent challenges with recruiting and retaining engaged youth and young adult representatives on the GJJC. By providing a consistent, youth-centered, and growth-oriented space for young people to get involved in policy work, the YVC engages more youth. The YVC provides members with skill building and professional development opportunities. YVC members engage in specific training and project work to develop skills and help the GJJC meet its obligations to learn from youth in the justice system. As a result of the YVC, several new youth members have been appointed to the GJJC and perspectives of youth in juvenile detention centers are heard and understood.

In late 2023 and early 2024 the GJJC focused its work on preparing a new Three-Year Plan covering goals and objectives for 2024-2026. DOJ staff gathered and analyzed data on delinquency problems in Wisconsin, including information from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, arrest rates and offense breakdowns, school discipline and chronic absenteeism rates, and other data. DOJ staff presented

the information to the GJJC to inform the development of the action plan. During the November 14, 2023, GJJC meeting, the members finalized their 2024-2026 goals and action plan.

The 2024-2026 Three-Year Plan reflects the problems identified in the data and the specific capacities of the GJJC. The plan prioritizes funding for prevention activities, wraparound supports for youth and their families, and mental health services. Additional priorities included reducing disparities and funding tribal programs. The specific subject-area priorities are enhanced by general priorities to collaborate with external agencies, use data to inform decision making, and make grant procedures accessible to a wide variety of agency types and sizes. As in previous years, the GJJC plans to take action to reduce racial and ethnic disparities, maintain compliance with the JJDP, and promote the implementation of best practices in Wisconsin's juvenile justice system.

#### *Youth Justice Reform Recommendations*

*Governor's 2023-2025 Biennial Budget:* The GJJC supported the provisions of the Governor's 2023-2025 State Budget proposal that addressed juvenile justice reform. The proposals included important substantive changes that, if passed, would have benefited Wisconsin children and were long overdue. The proposals included much-needed community-based services, alternatives to incarceration, and broader investments in mental health services. The GJJC highlighted that the budget proposal recognized that state and federal statistics show that youth face an increasing number of mental health challenges. System improvements focused on increased staff capacity and training, social connections for youth, and an overall expansion in funding are necessary first steps to supporting the well-being of Wisconsin children and families. The GJJC recommended the adoption of the following juvenile justice reform measures:

- Raise the age of civil, municipal, and juvenile court jurisdiction to all persons under the age of 18. The GJJC has officially supported raising the age of jurisdiction for many years. Wisconsin is one of only four remaining states to automatically treat children aged 17 as adults for purposes of criminal prosecution.
- Fully fund the reimbursement to counties for the costs associated with services for 17-year-olds in the juvenile justice system.
- Support additional funding to counties operating secured residential care centers for children and youth (SRCCYs) that serve more than one county.
- Support funding for Type 1 Juvenile Correctional Facilities in Milwaukee County and Statewide. Enacted in 2018, 2017 Wisconsin Act 185 required the Department of Corrections to establish one or more Type 1 juvenile corrections facilities no later than January 1, 2021, subject to the approval by the Joint Finance Committee. 2019 Wisconsin Act 8 subsequently delayed the establishment date to July 1, 2021.
- Support Grow Academy Expansion. Grow Academy is a non-secure residential program that serves delinquent male youth. The juvenile justice system faces a shortage of short-term residential beds that can accommodate high needs youth. The Grow Academy expansion would provide additional programming and placement options.
- Support funding for the development of robust youth justice data and reporting systems.

- Support the creation of a state training program for youth justice workers.
- Support funding for intensive family preservation services to prevent abuse and neglect and to stabilize families of children at risk of entering the out-of-home care system and youth at risk of entering the juvenile justice system.
- Full funding of the state courts, criminal justice system and juvenile justice system. This includes support for wage increases and additional positions for public defenders and district attorneys and an increase to the private bar rate for attorneys accepting public defender appointments. This funding is needed so Wisconsin can meet its constitutional obligations to all citizens impacted by the justice system.
- Support funding to improve the effectiveness of Youth Councils in various state agencies through convening of state staff supporting these councils and development of a statewide Youth Wellness Network to advise on systems affecting children's mental health and well-being.

The GJJC continues to support additional juvenile justice reforms to provide all youth with the tools to be successful, including:

- Raising the minimum age of delinquency jurisdiction from 10 to 12 years of age so that age-appropriate programs and services can be delivered to the youngest children in the juvenile justice system.
- Eliminating automatic original adult court jurisdiction for certain offenses. Statutes should be amended to allow for transfer of jurisdiction to adult court only after petition, hearing and judicial determination.
- Eliminating the use of secure detention for all status offenders. Children involved in conduct that would not be criminal for adults should not be detained or sanctioned in secure detention facilities. The deinstitutionalization of status offenders is a core principle of the JJDPA.
- Reforming sentencing laws for children sentenced as adults to eliminate mandatory life without parole and other mandatory penalties that apply to adult offenders.

*2023 AB48/SB55 Relating To: Prosecuting or Adjudicating Delinquent a Person Under the Age of 18 for Committing an Act of Prostitution*

The GJJC supported Safe Harbor legislation designed to steer young victims of commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking away from delinquency or criminal justice system involvement. In Wisconsin, sex trafficking of a child involves the use of a child for commercial sex acts, whether or not any force, fraud or coercion is involved. Any involvement of a minor in sexual acts for money or anything of value, including basic survival needs, is against the law.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Wisconsin Department of Justice. 2020.

Children are being sex trafficked in Wisconsin. In 2019, 74.38% of Wisconsin police chiefs and sheriffs believed this to be true.<sup>3</sup> Of note, twenty-four law enforcement agencies in 16 counties reported arrests of juveniles for prostitution between 2014 and 2018 and zero human trafficking incidents for the same timeframe. Ten of 13 agencies that reported having incidents involving a minor trading sex for something of value recorded zero human trafficking incidents for the same time period. 58% of chief and sheriff respondents reported that their agencies enforce prostitution laws against juveniles. An additional 25% reported it would depend on the circumstances whether they would do so. This data raises the question of whether children are being properly identified and treated as victims of child sex trafficking.

Additional responses to this 2019 law enforcement survey related to human trafficking indicated many agencies consider factors that do not align with statutory elements when deciding whether to charge a juvenile with prostitution (such as: the exact age of the minor, the age of the sex buyer, whether the minor was forced, etc.).

Some agencies indicated a prostitution arrest might be used as leverage to get victims into the justice system for services.<sup>4</sup>

Current best practices recommend taking a holistic approach to working with victims of sex trafficking. This includes treating them as victims, using the same interview techniques as those used in child abuse cases, increasing access to victim sensitive and other targeted services, and focusing on more significant penalties for those who recruit, traffic, and abuse children.<sup>5</sup>

These bills would have Wisconsin join 30 plus states that treat victims of sex trafficking as victims and protect them from being further stigmatized and punished in the juvenile justice or criminal justice system. This change in statute would also provide clear guidance to all criminal justice partners so child sex trafficking victims are treated fairly throughout the state. As of 4/15/2024, both bills failed to pass.

*2024 SB801/AB845 Relating to: Sentencing for Crimes Committed by a Person Who is Under the Age of 18.*

The GJJC voted to approve a policy statement in support of reforms to sentencing for youthful offenders. The GJJC recommends the law be changed to prohibit courts from imposing a life sentence, without eligibility for release, on youth who commit crimes before turning 18. The GJJC supports the shift towards requiring courts to set a date by which a youth would be eligible for release to extended supervision. The GJJC further recommends creating a new sentence adjustment procedure for youth currently serving life sentences for crimes committed before turning 18.

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<sup>3</sup> Wisconsin Department of Justice. 2020. [2019 Law Enforcement Assessment of Sex Trafficking in Wisconsin Five Key Takeaways](#).

<sup>4</sup> Wisconsin Department of Justice. 2020. [2019 Law Enforcement Assessment of Sex Trafficking in Wisconsin](#).

<sup>5</sup> Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. 2002. [Protecting Our Children: Working Together to End Child Prostitution](#).

## Compliance

### Introduction

The JJDPa contains 33 statutory requirements states must satisfy to be eligible to receive Title II, Part B, Formula Grant funding. Several of the 33 requirements are deemed “core” because OJJDP must reduce a state’s annual grant award by 20 percent for each core requirement where the state’s violations exceed the OJJDP determined violation threshold. As the data below demonstrates, Wisconsin did not exceed the violation threshold for any of the core requirements in the last two years, thereby maintaining full funding.

To gather data and certify compliance, WI DOJ staff complete record reviews and on-site inspections of jails, detention centers, court holdings, municipal lockups, law enforcement agencies, and correctional facilities. Some of the on-site audits are completed in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections-Office of Detention Facilities. Any facility that has a secure characteristic; namely, locking interview room, locking holding cell, cuffing bench/bar/rail; must be inspected at least once every three years. Collocated facilities must be inspected annually.

During the 10/1/22 – 9/30/23 reporting period, 100 percent of Wisconsin JJDPa monitored facilities returned Annual Survey data and/or were audited as required.<sup>6</sup>

During the 10/1/23 – 9/30/24 reporting period, 100 percent of Wisconsin JJDPa monitored facilities returned Annual Survey data and/or were audited as required.<sup>7</sup>

WI DOJ would like to thank law enforcement and youth justice stakeholders across the state for their responsiveness, collaboration, and attention to detail related to youth justice best practices and JJDPa requirements.

### Core Requirements

#### *Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO) – 34 U.S.C. § 11133(a)(11)(A)*

Youth who are charged with or who have committed an offense that would not be criminal if committed by an adult (status offenders), or youth who are not charged with any offense and are unauthorized immigrants or are alleged to be dependent, neglected or abused (non-offenders), shall not be placed in secure detention facilities or secure correctional facilities.

The Valid Court Order (VCO) exception provides that if a youth is taken into custody for violating a valid court order issued for committing a status offense, that youth may be placed in a secure juvenile detention or correctional facility, assuming the detailed and numerous statutory requirements for this exception are met.

Additionally, status offenders may be placed in secure detention or correctional facilities, if the placement is in accordance with the Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ).

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<sup>6</sup> 508 Annual Survey responses, including nonsecure survey responses, 88 on-site inspections, 9 record reviews.

<sup>7</sup> 525 Annual Survey responses, including nonsecure survey responses, 48 on-site inspections, 8 record reviews, 15 nonsecure verification inspections.

## DSO Data Summary

Reporting Period	DSO Violations	Valid Court Order Exceptions	Interstate Compact for Juveniles Exceptions	OJJDP Threshold (per 100,000 youth)	WI Calculated Rate of Compliance (per 100,000 youth)
10/1/22 – 9/30/23	6	6	4	3.08	.48
10/1/23 – 9/30/24	12	13	0	3.23	1.02

*Sight and Sound Separation (S &S) - 34 U.S.C. § 11133(a)(12)*

Youth alleged to be or found to be delinquent, status offenders, and youth who are not charged with any offense and who are unauthorized immigrants or alleged to be dependent, neglected, or abused may not be detained or confined in any institution in which they have sight or sound contact with adult inmates.

Sight or sound contact is defined as any physical, clear visual, or verbal contact that is not brief and inadvertent.

## S &amp; S Data Summary

Reporting Period	S & S Violations	OJJDP Threshold (per 100,000 youth)	WI Calculated Rate of Compliance (per 100,000 youth)
10/1/22 – 9/30/23	0	.66	0.0
10/1/23 – 9/30/24	1	.16	.09

*Jail Removal (JR) - 34 U.S.C. § 11133(a)(13)*

Youth shall not be detained or confined in any jail or lockup for adults, with the exceptions noted below.

The exceptions to the jail removal requirement apply only as long as youth do not have sight or sound contact with adult inmates and the state has in effect a policy that requires individuals who work with both juveniles and adult inmates in collocated facilities to have been trained and certified to work with juveniles.

Under the six-hour exception, a youth accused of a delinquent offense may be detained or confined in a jail or lockup for adults for no more than 6 hours for the purposes of processing or release or while awaiting transfer to a juvenile facility.

Under the rural exception, youth accused of non-status offenses may be detained or confined in jails or lockups for adults for as long as 48 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays) while awaiting an initial court appearance. Facilities must receive approval from WI DOJ Juvenile Justice Unit and the WI DOC Office of Detention Facilities prior to utilizing the rural exception.

## JR Data Summary

Reporting Period	JR Violations	Uses of the Rural Exception	OJJDP Threshold (per 100,000 youth)	WI Calculated Rate of Compliance (per 100,000 youth)
10/1/22 – 9/30/23	37	11	8.81	2.94
10/1/23 – 9/30/24	59	14	15.13	5.04

*Juveniles Charged as Adults (JCA) - 34 U.S.C. § 11133(a)(11)(B)*

An individual under the age of 17 who is charged as an adult (via waiver or original adult court jurisdiction) cannot be detained or confined in an adult jail or lockup or have sight or sound contact with adult inmates, except:

An individual under the age of 17 charged as an adult may be detained in an adult jail or lockup if one of the Jail Removal (JR) exceptions (described above) applies or a court may determine after a hearing, and in writing, that it is in the interest of justice to permit the individual to be detained in a jail or lockup for adults or have sight or sound contact with adult inmates. If the court makes an initial determination that it is in the interest of justice to detain the individual in a jail or lockup for adults, the court must hold a hearing at least every 30 days (at least every 45 days in a rural exception jurisdiction) to review whether it is still in the interest of justice to hold the youth in an adult jail or lockup. The statutorily required judicial findings are defined within the JJDPA and incorporated into Wisconsin court form CR-219.

The maximum amount of time that a youth charged as an adult may be detained in an adult jail or lockup or have sight or sound contact with adult inmates in a secure facility is 180 days, unless the court determines, in writing, that there is good cause for such an extension, or the youth expressly waives this 180-day limit.

JCA is the newest of the core requirements, added via the 2018 reauthorization of the JJDPA. The most recent reporting period is the first time that OJJDP has set and enforced a compliance threshold for this core requirement.

As part of the JCA implementation process, on 1/8/2024, Wisconsin DOJ circulated a memo with updated guidance to various criminal justice stakeholders, agencies, and facilities. This memo clarified that the JCA core requirement applies to all individuals under the age of 17 charged as adults and housed in a county jail (both waiver and original adult jurisdiction). County jails immediately began work to implement this updated guidance, and from 1/31/24 to 9/30/24 there were only 3 violations of the JCA core requirement. Wisconsin DOJ staff appreciate the partnership and collaboration with county jails in adjusting their internal policies and procedures to come into compliance with the JJDPA.

## JCA Data Summary

Reporting Period	JCA Violations	JCA Compliant Court Hearings	OJJDP Threshold (per 100,000 youth)	WI Calculated Rate of Compliance (per 100,000 youth)
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10/1/22 – 9/30/23	47	Not collected	None	3.73
10/1/23 – 9/30/24	15	51	14.68	1.28

*Addressing Racial and Ethnic Disparities - 34 U.S.C. § 11133(a)(15)*

Racial and Ethnic Disparities Discussion

The final core requirement of the JJDP is the reduction of racial and ethnic disparities within the juvenile justice system. Unlike the other core requirements of the JJDP, compliance with the reduction of racial and ethnic disparities does not have a numerical standard. OJJDP requires an annual Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction plan that includes three components:

1. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of statewide rates of disparities for at least four out of five contact points of the system: arrest, diversion, pre-trial detention, disposition commitments, and transfers to adult court;
2. An action plan with state-specific, state-directed programmatic goals and measurable objectives to reduce disparities; and,
3. An outcome-based evaluation of the progress towards achieving the previous year's goals.

Although overall numbers of youth who encounter the juvenile justice system have declined over recent years, disparities have varied. Utilizing 2023 OJJDP EZAPO data, and Wisconsin state agency data, the following findings were submitted to OJJDP in 2025:

- **Arrest:** Black youth make up 10% of the youth population in Wisconsin, yet they account for 29% of youth arrests. Black youth are 3 times more likely to be arrested than White youth. White youth represent 71% of the youth population in Wisconsin. However, less than 5% of White youth are arrested. Native American youth make up 1% of the youth population in Wisconsin. However, they account for 4% of youth arrests. Native American youth are more than 2 times as likely to be arrested than White youth.
- **Diversion:** Approximately half of arrested youth are referred to youth justice intake. However, not all referred youth are petitioned to court; some are diverted. Of referred youth, Black, Native American, Hispanic youth of any race, and Asian youth (though to a lesser extent) are less likely than White youth to be diverted from court processing. This is critical because research shows that diverted youth are less likely to reoffend and are more likely to experience better life outcomes.
- **Pre-trial Detention:** The number of Wisconsin youth detained decreased in 2024, resulting in improved disparities. Although disparities improved, pretrial detention disparities are significant for all youth of color, especially for Black youth. Black youth in Wisconsin are 5.9 times more likely to be detained pre-trial than White youth. Native American youth are more than 2 times as likely, and both Asian and Hispanic youth are 3 times as likely to be detained.
- **Disposition Commitments:** Of youth who are recommended for petition, Black youth are more than 3 times as likely to be placed in either Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake School juvenile

correctional facilities than White youth. Hispanic and Native American youth are nearly 2 times as likely to be placed in a correction facility.

- **Waivers to Adult Court:** Youth waived to adult court includes youth who are transferred to criminal court as a result of a judicial finding. This does not include youth whose cases are under adult court jurisdiction due to meeting the criteria for original adult court jurisdiction for criminal proceedings under Wisconsin Statute §938.183. The number of petitioned youth waived to adult court decreased from 2023 to 2024. Although disparities improved for Black youth in 2024, Black youth remain overrepresented in waivers to adult court. In 2024, Black youth were twice as likely as White youth to be waived to adult court when petitioned. Disparities slightly worsened for Hispanic youth to being twice as likely to be waived. Native American youth are less likely than White youth to be waived. Disparities for Asian youth significantly increased in 2024, to being twice as likely as White youth to be waived. The fluctuation for Asian youth is due in part to the small number of Asian youth petitioned and waived to adult court, such that an increase of one youth in 2024 significantly affected disparities.

In FY2024, the GJJC and Wisconsin DOJ set the goal of reducing disparities at the points of arrest and diversion through a prevention-based strategy. Funding was allocated towards delinquency prevention and positive youth development programs as well as training for law enforcement agencies on adolescent development and implicit bias. There has been a decline in total arrests, however, disparities remain.

In FY2024, Wisconsin DOJ and the GJJC identified four overarching goals:

1. **Research:** The ERD Subcommittee will solicit input from experts and individuals with lived experience in the juvenile justice system about what factors create disparities in Wisconsin and effective solutions for reducing disparities.
2. **Education:** The ERD subcommittee will bring stakeholders together to review evidence-based and promising interventions to reduce disparities. WI DOJ will ensure racial and ethnic disparity data is publicly available and accessible to a variety of audiences. ERD Subcommittee members and WI DOJ staff will partner to present R/ED data and reduction best practice information to juvenile justice stakeholders and decision makers.
3. **Funding:** WI DOJ will fund agencies' efforts to collect data, identify local disparities, and identify root causes of disparities. WI DOJ will also fund trainings, programs, and strategic interventions that reduce disparities, and encourage Title II subgrant applicants to provide a description of how their program will address disparities.
4. **Data Analysis:** WI DOJ will collect and improve data quality and analysis accuracy.

In 2024, Wisconsin aimed to reduce disparities at two contact points: arrest and diversion for Black and Native American youth. Several action steps were identified to achieve these goals. Although Wisconsin did not achieve the overall goal of improving disparities at both arrest and diversion, progress was made and several of the identified action steps were achieved. Wisconsin DOJ coordinated with experts in the youth justice field to present promising strategies to reduce disparities to the GJJC Ethnic and Racial Disparities (E/RD) Subcommittee. Together, WI DOJ and the

Youth Voice Commission (YVC) solicited feedback from youth in detention facilities on system change through the Youth Outreach Project. WI DOJ began efforts to identify why disparities exist at a local level by analyzing county arrest data. Through several presentations and the creation of two factsheets, WI DOJ ensured R/ED data is publicly available and accessible. Furthermore, funding opportunities were available for agencies to develop, implement a new, or expand on an existing program to reduce impact on implicit bias on the juvenile justice system with a focus on racial and ethnic disparities.

The GJJC will continue to prioritize racial and ethnic disparity reduction at the point of arrest as it represents the formal entryway into the system. These efforts will be supported by leveraging Title II formula funding for delinquency prevention and positive youth development programs.

#### *Recommendations Regarding Compliance with the Core Requirements*

As noted above, over the past several years, Wisconsin remained in compliance and received full Title II funding by falling below OJJDP established violation thresholds. The recommendations below are based on an analysis of common fact patterns and issues that resulted in JJDP violations. Proactively addressing these items will ensure that Wisconsin stays in compliance in future years and that state and local agencies adhere to established best practices in the youth justice field. WI DOJ recognizes that the Wisconsin youth justice system is complex, in flux, and involves budgetary, legislative, and other local level considerations.

#### Deinstitutionalization of Status Offender (DSO)

In recent years, the vast majority of DSO violations occur when:

- A Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) or Juvenile in Needs of Protective Services (JIPS) jurisdiction youth runs away from a placement, and there is a corresponding human trafficking / safety concern. Once located, the youth is placed in juvenile detention.
- A JIPS jurisdiction youth is placed in juvenile detention for habitual truancy/school attendance concerns, and the requirements of the Valid Court Order exception are not met.
- A CHIPS or JIPS jurisdiction youth with significant mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral health needs does not have alternative placement options and he or she is housed in juvenile detention.

To address the issues surrounding DSO violations, it is recommended that Wisconsin:

- Support in-home and nonsecure out-of-home placements, with a focus on trauma informed mental and behavioral health services for abused, neglected, trafficked, or status offender youth.
- Offer training and make law enforcement and youth justice stakeholders aware of the availability of the services noted in the bullet above, redirecting law enforcement time and resources towards individuals committing serious delinquent or criminal acts.

- Examine the appropriateness of Safe Harbor legislation<sup>8</sup> that decriminalizes acts of prostitution for minors, with a shifted focus on victim-centered services and prosecution of the adults committing criminal acts.<sup>9</sup>
- Examine the use of the Valid Court Order exception and state statutes authorizing secure detention for status and nonoffender youth. The recently introduced reauthorization of the JJDPa phases out the VCO exception, with limited exceptions for Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ) youth.<sup>10</sup> The legislature should examine a similar adjustment to Wisconsin statutes.
- Change state statutes to align with the VCO exception.<sup>11</sup> Under the exception as currently written, the JJDPa allows status offenders who violate valid court orders to be held in a secure detention facility for no longer than 7 days or the length of time authorized by the court, whichever is shorter. This provision conflicts with Wisconsin law, which allows sanctions greater than 7 days.

#### Jail Removal (JR)

In recent years, the vast majority of JR violations occur when:

- Youth who are accused of delinquent behaviors are placed in secure areas of a police department or municipal lockup for more than 6 hours for the purposes of processing or release or while awaiting transfer to a juvenile facility.
- Youth who are accused of status offenses (typically running away from a placement, curfew, or truancy violations) are placed in secure areas of a police department, for any amount of time.

To address the issues surrounding JR violations, it is recommended that Wisconsin:

- Support deflection, diversion, and community-based services for youth, especially in connection with status and low-level offenses. This will, where appropriate, provide law enforcement with non-criminal justice response options and enable them to direct time and resources towards serious delinquent or criminal acts. Assuming a non-law enforcement response, status and nonoffender youth will not be processed through secure areas of police departments, jails, or lockups, thereby eliminating the possibility of jail removal violations.

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<sup>8</sup> S.B. 73, (Wis. 2025) <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/sb73>; A.B. 79, (Wis. 2025); <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/ab79>.

<sup>9</sup> Wisconsin Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission. Assembly Bill 48/Senate Bill 55, relating to: prosecuting or adjudicating delinquent a person under the age of 18 for committing an act of prostitution. Letter to members of the Wisconsin legislature, May 10, 2023. <https://gjjc.widj.gov/sites/default/files/2023-05/GJJC%20AB48%20SB55%20memo%20Final%20signed%20with%20membership.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2025, S. ---, 119<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2025). [https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/juvenile\\_justice\\_and\\_delinquency\\_prevention\\_jjdp\\_a\\_reauthorization\\_act.pdf](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/juvenile_justice_and_delinquency_prevention_jjdp_a_reauthorization_act.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Wisconsin Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission. Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO) Recommendations to the Governor, May 29, 2020. <https://gjjc.widj.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/Attachment%20E%20-%20GJJC%20DSO%20Recommendations%20to%20the%20Governor.pdf>

- Support law enforcement agencies and jails with the training, staffing, and other resources to, when absolutely necessary, process youth accused of serious criminal or delinquent acts through secure spaces, separated from adults, and immediately transport them to a youth facility. Decreasing investigative and processing time, where possible, will decrease the number of JR violations.
- Support youth facilities with the training, staffing, and other resources to expeditiously intake and house delinquent and criminal jurisdiction youth. This focus on taking the burden off law enforcement and adult facilities recognizes that youthful offenders are different from adults, requiring different rehabilitative services and supports best met by specialized facilities and staff.

#### Juveniles Charged as Adults (JCA)

As noted above, since circulation of the 1/8/2024 guidance memo related to this core requirement, JCA violations have decreased significantly. Over the last several years, in preparation for OJJDP enforcement of this core requirement, WI DOJ staff have increased training and technical assistance efforts, with a focus on educating courts, attorneys, and jail staff. Presently, if a JCA violation occurs, it is typically when:

- An individual under the age of 17 commits an adult jurisdiction offense, either over the course of a weekend or during non-business hours and is placed in an adult jail without the requisite hearing and judicial findings.
- An individual under the age of 17 commits an adult jurisdiction offense, there is no juvenile detention facility willing or able to house the individual, and the individual is placed in an adult jail without the requisite hearings and judicial findings.
- An individual under the age of 17 commits an adult jurisdiction offense, a hearing is scheduled per the JCA requirements but does not align with the required time frames (either the hearing does not occur before or within 6 hours of placement in the adult jail or the review hearings do not occur every 30 days, or 45 days for rural jurisdictions).

To address the issues surrounding JCA violations, it is recommended that Wisconsin:

- Support deflection, diversion, and nonsecure community-based services for youth, especially in connection with status and low-level offenses. If these youth are completely removed from juvenile detention centers, it will open up detention beds for high risk and serious offenders, including those facing adult charges. Individuals under the age of 17 charged as adults may be housed in juvenile detention facilities under the JJDPA and state law, with no hearings required, making it impossible for a JCA violation to occur. In addition, this will free up court, district attorney, and public defender resources previously devoted to required initial and monthly JCA hearings.
- Support youth facilities with the training, staffing, and other resources necessary to house criminally charged individuals under the age of 17, including those with high needs. This will take the burden off adult jails that are not equipped to provide age-appropriate education, mental health, physical health, and other youth targeted services. In addition, this will avoid

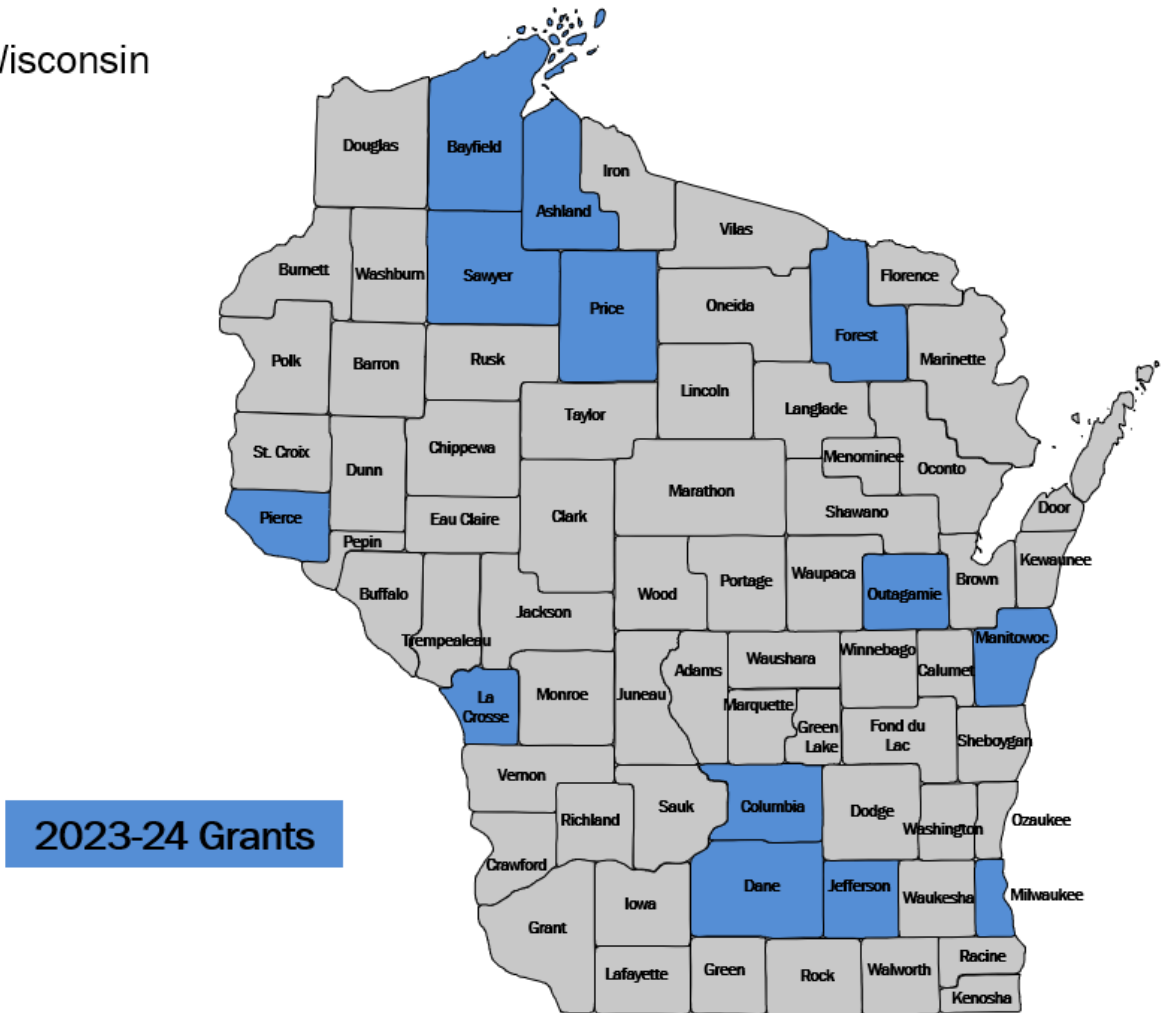
requiring adult jails to take on the risks associated with housing juveniles in adult facilities, including abuse, mental health, self-harm, and other concerns.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Silver IA, Semenza DC, Nedelec JL. [Incarceration of Youths in an Adult Correctional Facility and Risk of Premature Death](#). JAMA Netw Open. 2023 Jul 3; Mistrett, Marcy and Espinoza, Mariana. (2021). [Youth in Adult Courts, Jails, and Prisons](#). The Sentencing Project. ; Troilo, Maddy. (2018). [Locking up Youth with Adults: An Update](#). Prison Policy Initiative. ; and Neelum Arya, [Getting to Zero: A 50-State Study of Strategies to Remove Youth from Adult Jails](#), UCLA School of Law, 2018.

Subgrant Report

Wisconsin



<b>Recipient Agency:</b> Ashland County Health and Human Services		
<b>Project Title:</b> Expansion and Enhancement of SPARK Mentoring		
<b>Purpose Area:</b> Positive Youth Development		
<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2020	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$44,052	<b>Project Period:</b> 4/1/22-6/30/24
<p>Over the past several years, Ashland County developed and implemented a successful teen mentoring program called SPARK. SPARK served 196 youth from the Ashland School District and the Bad River Ojibwe Reservation in 2021. The program is open to all youth ages 12-18, and primarily serves at-risk youth from Ashland Middle School and High School. Through this funding, Ashland County expanded their hours for the SPARK drop-in mentoring center. They expanded partnerships with the school district to provide mentors during lunch time for all students and</p>		

additional hours for targeted mentoring for expelled and suspended youth. The expansion enabled 285 new youth aged 11-16 to enroll in SPARK programming since April 1, 2022.

The project continued past the end of the grant period and will be expanded through a referral partnership with local schools facilitated by a grant from another source. The school-based referrals will focus on providing youth of low socioeconomic status, low attendance, disciplinary referrals, suspensions or expulsions, and failing grades with intensive mentoring, academic support, social-emotional skill development, and behavioral health services.

Through the direct support to youth, multiple youth experienced positive impacts. Youth-mentor relationships facilitated positive conflict resolution and problem-solving between youth and their teachers. Additionally, mentors provided opportunities to build social and vocational skills and attend virtual educational activities that help youth avoid unsupervised out of school time and law enforcement contact.

**Recipient Agency:** Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians

**Project Title:** Game Sharers – Healing with Native Lacrosse

**Purpose Area:** Indian Tribes

<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2021	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$68,700	<b>Project Period:</b> 10/1/24-9/30/26
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Bad River member Joseph Gokee and UW-Extension educator, Joy Schelble, have led baaga’adowewin (native lacrosse) for Bad River for 9 years. It began to bring together a community grieving from a police shooting and transformed into a promising movement to bring back the “Creator’s Game.” The youth who have been playing the medicine game the longest are now in their late teens and have taken on leadership roles hosting games and teaching younger players. The program funds assist in this leadership development, family engagement, and juvenile delinquency prevention in rural northern Wisconsin through sport, culture, and mentorship.

Through the grant funds, participation has been more consistent, and more events have been held. A total of 39 events were held at the Ashland High School, Ashland Middle School, and other community locations. The program observed a growing mentorship between younger kids as older youth players taught and shared. The project leadership established communication with a network of leaders in regional tribes that have either started their own baaga’adowewin programs or are interested in doing so. This network has led to many new intertribal games and connections across communities. These events have built self-confidence and new relationships for the region’s tribal youth. They strengthened tribal relations with the Ashland School District and provided a framework for cultural competency among non-native staff and administration.

Numerous tribal, county, and local government agencies identify the program as an effective prevention and youth development program that support youth academic engagement and addresses truancy. The program is key to restoring of the game for Ojibwe people and the example of healthy, sober, and culturally grounded living.

There has been an increase in school performance expressed by the high graduation rate of tribal members this year. Youth members have shared testimony about the value of the program. One youth who was at risk of not graduating, did in fact graduate and was quoted in the Ashland High School Student Spotlight that one of the most meaningful things about high school was “baaga’adowewin. It taught me to be resilient, have a voice, and always strive.”

<b>Recipient Agency:</b> Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County		
<b>Project Title:</b> Community-Based Mentoring to Reduce Delinquency		
<b>Purpose Area:</b> Positive Youth Development		
<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2020	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$47,573	<b>Project Period:</b> 4/1/22-3/31/23
<p>Funds were used by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County (BBBS) to expand access to mentoring to 151 youth ages 10-16 in the Dane County area (57% increase from 2021). To reduce youth's likelihood of justice involvement, the program aimed to enhance their social-emotional wellbeing and develop aspirations for their future through meaningful mentoring experiences in the Community-Based Mentoring Program.</p> <p>Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County significantly expanded their volunteer recruitment outreach and increased their number of volunteer inquiries by 91% over previous years and that growth is likely to continue beyond the grant period. The increased number of mentors as well as additional staff enabled 25 new mentor-mentee matches to be made. Within each match, the Big connects with the Little, and their parents, and identifies areas of growth. One Little was very shy and struggled with confidence. Because of their Big's support and engagement, their parents indicated that their child's self-esteem improved and that the Little is starting to get more confident and open-up more to other people.</p> <p>While the matches started during the grant period, the relationships will continue beyond the grant and the program hopes to see growth in the mentoring relationships as time goes on. The investments in recruitment staff and infrastructure will continue to increase the number of volunteer mentors recruited and mentees paired going forward. Because BBBS has improved their processes, hired new staff, and grown their volunteer pool, they are positioned to have a bigger year than ever before. They will see the influence of the grant on their capacity for many months to come.</p>		
<b>Recipient Agency:</b> Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County		
<b>Project Title:</b> Community-Based Mentoring to Reduce Delinquency		
<b>Purpose Area:</b> Positive Youth Development		
<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2021	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$87,500	<b>Project Period:</b> 10/1/24-9/30/25
<p>Funds are used to expand access to mentoring to an additional 60 youth ages 8-16 in the Dane County area—growing the agency's annual capacity. To reduce youth's likelihood of justice involvement, the program aims to enhance their social-emotional wellbeing and develop aspirations for their future through meaningful mentoring experiences in the Community-Based Mentoring Program. The agency is investing in personnel, targeted recruitment, process improvements, and quality Match Support. These investments will 1) drive increased volunteer recruitment, with a focus on diverse volunteers, 2) accelerate child and volunteer enrollment, and 3) provide impactful mentoring. As a result, the program expects youth in the program to experience: 1) avoidance of risky behaviors, 2) higher educational expectations for the future, 3) social acceptance, and 4) increased parental and family trust.</p> <p>The program is on track to meet or exceed three of their goals. As of 6/30/25 the program had served 22 youth through the grant. They experienced barriers to increasing their volunteer</p>		

onboarding due to fingerprinting processing time. Despite the delays, they have matched volunteers under 45 days and youth under 180 days. They have increased the proportion of volunteer inquiries made by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and LGBTQ+ individuals. They have overperformed on their 12-month retention rate with a rate of 73%. Their volunteer inquiry to match conversion rate is also meeting their goal of 30%.

**Recipient Agency:** City of Lake Mills Police Department

**Project Title:** JJDPA Compliance Assistance

**Purpose Area:** Compliance Monitoring

**Title II Award Year:** FY2019

**Award Amount:** \$4,770

**Project Period:** 4/1/24-6/30/24

Funds were used by the Lake Mills Police Department to add video/audio recording capability to a non-secure space, so juveniles who are in custody for a status offense, or a non-criminal offense, can be interviewed in a non-secure area. Before receiving this grant, their only installed recording devices were in secure spaces. A camera system with audio/visual recording capabilities was installed in a conference room. This provides a non-secure space with recording capabilities to use with juveniles who are not in custody for delinquent offenses. Window decals were installed on all windows that separate the secure area (booking room) from the hallway. The decals provide for sight separation when a juvenile is in custody. This project will ensure that the police department can maintain sight and sound separation between juveniles and adults in custody.

**Recipient Agency:** City of Madison Police Department

**Project Title:** Breaking the Cycle Youth Mentoring

**Purpose Area:** Positive Youth Development

**Title II Award Year:** FY2019

**Award Amount:** \$33,066

**Project Period:** 4/1/22-8/31/23

Funds were used by the Madison Police Department, working in partnership with RISE Wisconsin, Inc., to provide youth mentoring to siblings of system-involved juveniles in the Breaking the Cycle wraparound program in Madison, Wis. Their goal was to break the cycle of youth from the same families committing crimes. Following a behavioral screening (SDQ) of the youth's strengths and difficulties, a collaborative goal was identified that shaped skill development and growth during mentoring sessions. The youth participants received the same screening upon completion of the program to document progress.

Mentor-mentee pairings were made, and mentors met with students to develop positive adult relationships and help the youth work towards their goals. One mentor met regularly with their mentee at school and providing in-classroom support as a volunteer aid at the youth's school. In this role, they helped the student catch up academically and receive the additional one-on-one support they needed.

**Recipient Agency:** Forest County Potawatomi Community

**Project Title:** Providing Protection Project

**Purpose Area:** Indian Tribes

<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2020	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$50,000	<b>Project Period:</b> 4/1/23-6/30/25
<p>The Forest County Potawatomi Community (FCPC) Community used funds to expand at-risk youth cultural protective factors. The Providing Protection Project aimed to strengthen protective factors by expanding and exposing youth to new cultural opportunities, while instilling a strong sense of identity in the youth through Potawatomi culture and traditions, ultimately decreasing juvenile delinquency. The program aimed to interactively connect youth with traditional knowledge holders and provide immersive hands-on experiences. They aimed to increase cultural protective opportunities and encourage active participation in these events. The program would also stimulate youth to push past their self-imposed limitations. Youth benefits included a sense of belonging, strong identity, healthy purpose, and regular exposure to healthy role models in a safe environment.</p> <p>During the project period, the program underwent changes as the community needs and resources changed. Instead of regalia and drum making classes, the recipient host a bison processing workshop using traditional methods. The event provided a unique opportunity for youth and the community participate in revitalizing their bison culture. The event activities began at the tribal farm with a traditional ceremony that taught the youth about the importance of bison and the cultural protocols for harvesting bison. Youth and community members learned techniques for processing the meat, tanning the hide, and making tools from each part of the animal. Community elders and youth worked together and ended each day with a celebration.</p> <p>Program staff saw youth take pride in their projects and parents shared their pride in their children's work. The biggest takeaway from the event was the respect that the community gained for the bison. There wasn't any waste from any of the meals, and the participants proudly ate their bison dishes. They realized the work that went into brain tanning and the true value of the bison hide. The bison brought the community together for 17 days where many cultural teachings were shared that boosted the community self-esteem in being Native American and the self confidence in participating in cultural events.</p> <p>The Forest County Potawatomi Community used funding to provide youth with an additional opportunity to apprentice to a master birch bark canoe builder. The youth learned the skills and then mentored and taught youth in the community what they learned. The program, in partnership with the Gun Lake Tribe, was an amazing cultural exchange for the youth. The build was a success and participating youth were able to get hands on experience during the project. In addition to the canoe building activities, an Ojibwe language specialist provided daily language lessons to the group. The specialist, Leon Valliere, shared history of the Anishinaabe nation, and how the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi are connected.</p> <p>The remaining funding was used to host snowshoe and net making classes for youth. The Potawatomi people have lost this knowledge and hope that these classes will revitalize these lost traditions.</p>		
<b>Recipient Agency:</b> Jefferson County Human Services Department		
<b>Project Title:</b> Deflecting Court Involvement Due to School Refusal		
<b>Purpose Area:</b> Community-Based Programs and Services		
<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2021	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$63,243	<b>Project Period:</b> 12/1/23-6/30/26

The program was designed to deflect youth referred to the Youth Justice system for school refusal behaviors/chronic truancy. The program was piloted in Jefferson School District at the high school, with additional early intervention programming for students at risk of truancy referrals at Jefferson Middle and High Schools. The program includes a school refusal intervention specialist who provides family-based case management based on the Functional Family Case Management model. School check in mentors meet with students at school as well as with their families in the home year-round. The program provides transportation services if/when the barrier exists, tutoring, parent coaching, incentives for students and family members, and other evidence-based services to address the core issues leading to school refusal. Additional programming is offered to middle and high school students that are at risk of chronic truancy due to trauma. Crisis intervention training using the Life Space Crisis Intervention model is provided for select teachers and teacher aids to address crisis behaviors in the classroom that can lead to school suspension and add to school refusal behaviors.

The program started slowly with low referrals. Over the past year referrals have steadily increased. After referral, students receive the WARNS assessment and are referred to services including the full School Attendance Improvement Programming or Check and Connect mentors. The county provided Check and Connect implementation and mentoring training for three individuals in the Watertown School District to expand the program beyond Jefferson School District. Ensuring that all school districts have trained Check and Connect mentors is critical to the sustainability of the program. The county provided Cognitive Behavioral Intervention in Schools (CBITS) group in one of the middle schools. The evidence-based intervention provides services for students who have experienced trauma that impacts their education. It is a key service the county added to their service array to address prevention of school avoidance behaviors.

**Recipient Agency:** La Crosse County Human Services—Justice Support Services

**Project Title:** Mentoring through Community Cultural Liaisons

**Purpose Area:** Positive Youth Development

<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2020	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$50,000	<b>Project Period:</b> 4/1/22-3/31/23
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La Crosse County Human Services enhanced the La Crosse System of Care (SOC) through the addition of one part-time Community Cultural Liaison contracted through Hope Restores, a local non-profit agency. The program targeted services to youth who identify as black, age 10-18 years old within the City of La Crosse. Youth were identified through participation in SOC or through interactions with neighborhood resource officers. The overall goal of this project was to enhance existing positive youth development and mentoring initiatives by: creating opportunities to engage meaningfully with youth while connecting to existing community resources to build resilience, self-esteem, connection with peers and social support; and increasing access to culturally responsive services.

Through this project, 24 Black youth in the community were provided support and services through the Community Cultural liaison. During the program, transportation was identified as a significant barrier for youth. To help with this issue, the program began supporting youth getting their driving permits. All youth participating in the program showed improvement in school attendance and academics. Three youth completed drivers' education and obtained permits in the final quarter. Three youth found employment.

<p>One youth participating in the program started out very unmotivated and felt hopeless starting their sophomore year. As a part of the program, the mentor began picking them up every day for school and was able to advocate for more academic supports.</p> <p>The project will be continued past the grant period as the local YMCA has decided to continue to fund the mentoring position piloted with this grant. La Crosse County and the YMCA have developed an agreement to continue collaboration on the mentoring program and youth basketball program.</p>		
<b>Recipient Agency:</b> Manitowoc County Human Services Department		
<b>Project Title:</b> Youth Justice Deflection and Diversion Planning		
<b>Purpose Area:</b> Compliance Monitoring		
<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2019	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$68,338	<b>Project Period:</b> 10/1/23-8/31/24
<p>Manitowoc County assembled a collaborative group to design a program that deflects youth away from arrest/youth justice referral and refers them to community-based services that address underlying needs and reduces youth exposure to the justice system.</p> <p>The program supported ongoing stakeholder meetings related to deflection and diversion, along with discussions and work on local policy. The stakeholder group was made up of law enforcement, school staff, court officials, human services staff, service providers, and community members. The group received technical assistance from the RFK National Resource center and visited Fairfax County, VA to learn about their deflection and diversion program. The site visit provided valuable information about diversion systems and focus on restorative practices.</p>		
<b>Recipient Agency:</b> Manitowoc County Human Services Department		
<b>Project Title:</b> Youth Justice Deflection/Diversion Implementation		
<b>Purpose Area:</b> Delinquency Prevention		
<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2021	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$87,500	<b>Project Period:</b> 7/1/24-6/30/25
<p>Manitowoc County hired a part-time staff member (.75) as a Community Navigator to assist in deflecting and diverting youth from the youth justice system. In addition, Manitowoc County continued to work with the RFK National Resource Center on policy development and data collection related to youth justice.</p> <p>The program hosted stakeholder meetings to gain input and support in the updated juvenile court policies. They continue to receive deflection referrals and have worked to further educate law enforcement about the deflection referral option.</p>		
<b>Recipient Agency:</b> Phillips School District		
<b>Project Title:</b> Capacity Building and Diversion Project		
<b>Purpose Area:</b> Compliance Monitoring		
<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2019	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$71,928	<b>Project Period:</b> 10/1/23-6/30/24

The School District of Phillips used the funds to support all youth through the administration of the three tiers of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. They developed a procedure to identify at-risk youth which would include data collection and analysis and the completion of screening and assessment tools. Through the district’s Multiple Level Systems of Support, the school assigned youth identified as at risk to work with a member of the Pupil Services Team with the goal of identifying tier 3 supports to divert the child from becoming involved in the youth justice system. The school educated the school liaison officer as well as all district staff who work with youth ages 10-17 on the diversion programs already available to students in the district and newly created programming to assist them in using diversion tactics in place of referrals to juvenile court.

The youth diversion grant was a great success. It provided an opportunity to review current policies and procedures and reassess how youth were referred to law enforcement for infractions completed on school groups. The onboarding of the behavior interventionist was the biggest accomplishment. Once they were on board, the agency was able to identify target areas and the interventionist was trained in supporting curriculum to address the school’s issues. Tier 3 support services were available for children in at-risk situations. Children and parents together received one-on-one support through meetings and education. The Price County CST program and Price County Mental Health and AODA Coalition were partners in the project. They worked with the programs to improve communication between the school and families, and the School Resource Officers. The AODA Coalition supported training for district members in Lifelines and Sources of Strength.

While they encountered communication obstacles between the local police departments and the school, they plan to meet with the Chief of Police at the beginning of the school year to discuss the barrier and organize their collaboration.

The Phillips School District worked together with two other local school districts to plan for social emotional learning initiatives in all three districts. They connected with the AODA/Mental Health Coalition to offer trainings and gain knowledge about helpful topics. They coordinated with local law enforcement and the county department of health and human services to provide services for youth that help them avoid contact with the court system. The Behavioral Interventionist has worked with the District Attorney to discuss programming options and diversion tactics being used and has full support of the Price County District Attorney’s Office.

<b>Recipient Agency:</b> Phillips School District		
<b>Project Title:</b> SDP Capacity Building and Youth Diversion Program		
<b>Purpose Area:</b> Delinquency Prevention		
<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2021	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$87,500	<b>Project Period:</b> 7/1/24-6/30/25

The School District of Phillips used funds to support all youth through the administration of the three tiers of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Youth identified as "at risk" worked with a member of the Pupil Services Team to identify tier 3 supports to divert the child from becoming involved in the youth justice system. The school liaison officer, building principal, and members of the pupil services team ensured youth were offered diversion programs that were established over the last year in place of referrals to juvenile court.

The Behavioral Interventionist has become a key part of the school's pupil services team. The Tier II support specialists have been in their roles for a school year and they have seen a significant increase in visits to their rooms throughout the year as well as a significant decrease in office referrals and law enforcement referrals. The wellness room is up and running and has been a great addition to the school. Children with sensory issues have been able to use the room to calm down and children with behavioral issues have found it to be a safe space where they are welcomed and supported until they are able to return to class. These resources have created a better environment in the regular education classrooms and helped students to have a sense of belonging in the school even when they are struggling with mental health issues.

**Recipient Agency:** Pierce County Department Human Services

**Project Title:** Family Centered Treatment for Youth Justice

**Purpose Area:** Community-Based Programs and Services

**Title II Award Year:** FY2019

**Award Amount:** \$50,000

**Project Period:** 10/1/22-6/30/24

Pierce County Department of Human Services planned to use the funds to expand the use of Family Centered Treatment for Pierce County youth and their families that are involved in the Youth Justice system. The goal was to keep families intact by improving family functioning and eliminating the need for an out-of-home placement. The project flourished and served the families in the county's Human Service program areas. The therapists worked intensively with families to develop skills. The families worked with Family-Centered Treatment report improving their communication and relationships with their children as a result. The project will be continued beyond the end of the grant as Pierce County was able to implement two permanent full time Family Centered Treatment (FCT) therapist positions within the County. They identified sustainable funding through their Comprehensive Community Service program. By utilizing DOJ funds to offer intensive in-home therapeutic services and employ tools like the YASI risk and needs assessment, they effectively identified and supported youth with moderate to high needs through the program. Maintaining program fidelity and conducting frequent meetings with families produced clear positive outcomes including enhanced family functioning, improved communication, increase accountability, and a decrease in crisis incidents. These efforts not only benefit the families, they also contribute to a safer and more stable community.

**Recipient Agency:** Pointters Community Initiatives

**Project Title:** PCI Mental Health Empowerment Program

**Purpose Area:** Community-Based Programs and Services

**Title II Award Year:** FY2020

**Award Amount:** \$125,000

**Project Period:** 4/1/24-6/30/25

Funds were used to implement the Mental Health Empowerment Program. The program aimed to provide comprehensive mental health support to juveniles and their parents in Wisconsin. The project integrated mental health counseling, therapeutic workshops, and psychoeducational resources. The program aimed to enhance mental health resilience, facilitate therapeutic engagement, and promote community awareness. The program targeted improved safety, juvenile accountability, and competence. The program strove to divert youth from out-of-home placement, reduce recidivism, and support successful reentry into families and communities.

Pointters Community Initiatives committed to foster mental health empowerment and create lasting positive impacts on Wisconsin's youth and families.

During the first quarter of the program, they completed intake assessments for new clients. The clients went through a first therapeutic session and met with family therapists. In addition to the private and family sessions, the program conducted workshops using art to provide a creative outlet for clients that complements the traditional approaches.

The program introduced youth participants to mindfulness and other stress management techniques. The tools equipped youth with methods for managing stress and improving emotional regulation. Interactive group discussions fostered peer support, increased self-awareness, and strengthened the social-emotional skills of participating youth.

**Recipient Agency:** Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

**Project Title:** Boys & Girls Club of Gitchigami Mentoring Program

**Purpose Area:** Indian Tribes

**Title II Award Year:** FY2019

**Award Amount:** \$28,597

**Project Period:** 10/1/22-6/30/24

The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians planned to use funds to implement a youth mentoring program at the Boys and Girls Club of Gitchigami. The youth mentoring project aimed to improve self-esteem, confidence, life skills and social skills of tribal youth mentees; enhance youth connection and commitment to school, family and community; and maintain the Ojibwe language, tradition, customs, community and tribal youth activities. Program staff conducted several mentoring recruiting efforts including attending job fairs and other events. They attended and hosted events for families and youth to get to know the program and encourage participation. Despite the efforts, the program was not able to hire mentors for the program and make matches with youth. Technical assistance was provided however, staff were unable to resolve the barriers.

**Recipient Agency:** Rio Community School District

**Project Title:** School-Based Restorative Justice Program

**Purpose Area:** Delinquency Prevention

**Title II Award Year:** FY2019

**Award Amount:** \$48,730

**Project Period:** 7/1/22-6/30/23

The restorative justice program at Rio Middle/High School aimed to proactively prevent and address behaviors that lead to unsuccessful academic and postsecondary outcomes. They believe in "Maslow before Bloom" meaning that students' basic human needs and mental health must be nurtured prior to expecting ideal behavioral and academic outcomes. The restorative justice program works within their current comprehensive school based mental health program to expand wraparound services for students at school.

The restorative justice coordinator, a certified school counselor, worked with repeat offenders on a scheduled basis to identify specialized supports to help the students make better choices moving forward. The work included helping students identify triggers and positive coping mechanisms, utilize trauma-informed care practices, identify and remove barriers, and implement strategies to help develop students' self-awareness and regulation. Building positive

relationships with students and serving them in an unbiased manner was key to the success of the program.

The Restorative Justice Coordinator received a significant amount of training to implement restorative justice practices and was able to teach what he learned to other staff. The school achieved their goal of reducing identified repeat offenders by 25%. The implementation of restorative circles was a positive tier 1 or 2 intervention. Students expressed positive comments about the restorative circles. Students who participated in restorative circles continued to see improvement.

**Recipient Agency:** Sawyer County

**Project Title:** Sawyer County Positive Youth Development Program

**Purpose Area:** Positive Youth Development

**Title II Award Year:** FY2021

**Award Amount:** \$87,500

**Project Period:** 10/1/24-12/31/25

Funds are used by Sawyer County to promote positive youth engagement aimed at educating youth on ways to have fun without engaging in delinquent activities. They planned to coordinate one-on-one support with a dedicated individual from Sirona Recovery who is a social worker or licensed professional counselor. The focus of the support is around healthy relationships and discussions around life-altering and critical topics related to drugs, alcohol, and social media that tie into making positive choices as alternatives when faced with tough decisions and peer pressures. The project will help to improve safety and juvenile competence by identifying at-risk youth to reduce the number of youth delinquency referrals and formal system involvement within the county.

Sirona recovery planned to implement Intensive Support Services in Sawyer County. The program will increase Individual Service Plans that connect youth to services such as individual skill building, individual and family counseling, family dynamics, healthy relationships, drugs and alcohol prevention, mentoring, pro-social activities, connection to community resources, and assistance obtaining employment.

The program has successfully supported youth with re-enrolling in traditional school or determining alternative educational opportunities according to youth needs. The program has resulted in a reduction in truancy referrals. Staff and contractors on the program have worked collaboratively to tackle cases and client needs. During the first half of the program, they focused on youth struggling with truancy and built engagement through relationship-based approaches. Staff completed trainings in evidence-based Teen Intervene and Skill Streaming curriculums. Program staff assess each youth to understand what specific barriers have led youth to skip school and then create an individualized plan to target the unique needs and challenges of each family. The main barriers addressed so far include transportation, substance use, mental health, and care giver schedules and jobs. Staff provide the youth with Skill Streaming sessions to build social skills and work toward personal goals. They engage youth in Teen Intervene sessions and connect them with outpatient substance use treatment. Notably, youth report that the services help them feel more confident and supported. Youth share that their friends want to join the program because of the positive experiences they've shared. Through relationship-based care, individualized planning, and skill development, youth show increased engagement with school, treatment, and other pro-social activities, laying a foundation for lasting positive change.

<b>Recipient Agency:</b> Wauwatosa School District		
<b>Project Title:</b> Restorative Practices		
<b>Purpose Area:</b> Delinquency Prevention		
<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2019	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$49,980	<b>Project Period:</b> 7/1/22-6/30/25
<p>Funds were used by Madison Elementary School and Whitman Middle School in Wauwatosa, and additional collaborating staff in the district, to strengthen, expand, and level up their fledgling restorative justice/practices action plan established in the 2020-2021 school year. They used the funding for training, coaching, consulting, and supplies to help move from reading and theory to application and implementation.</p> <p>Madison Elementary School trained their full-time staff including all new staff and regular education and special education paraprofessionals. They continued to partner with Whitman Middle School which received restorative practices training and consultation through the grant. Consistent and effective restorative practices have helped students feel a sense of belonging and safety at school. Staff are better equipped to manage and support student behavioral and social emotional needs. The program has continued to see reductions in Office Discipline Referrals and Out of School Suspensions as a result of the restorative practice work.</p> <p>All staff at Whitman Middle School were trained in the foundational restorative practices and all students have learned and participated in lessons about foundational restorative practices. As a result of this funding, students reported an increase in feelings of safety and care in school and with their teachers. Through the school staff's commitment to restorative practices training and implementation, they met many of their school growth objectives including an increase in literacy and math proficiency for Black or African American students and students with disabilities. Teachers reported seeing kids open up to each other more and more through the consistent inclusion of community building opportunities during class. When students are excited to listen to each other share personal experiences, they become better listeners and community members when it comes time to learn and grow in their mathematical problem solving.</p>		
<b>Recipient Agency:</b> WestCare		
<b>Project Title:</b> Youth Program Evaluation Study		
<b>Purpose Area:</b> Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction		
<b>Title II Award Year:</b> FY2020	<b>Award Amount:</b> \$55,463	<b>Project Period:</b> 5/1/23-4/30/24
<p>Funds were used by WestCare Wisconsin, Inc., to conduct a program evaluation study on the programs that serve at-risk and justice involved youth. WestCare provided group, individual and family mentoring activities, restorative justice healing peace circles, Forward Thinking, Transformational Change along with Social Capitol and Botvin Life Skills Training curriculum weekly. The program goal was to identify improved outcomes (such as improved academic performance and reduced school dropout rates) for at-risk and system-involved youth, and reduced negative outcomes (including juvenile delinquency, substance use and gang participation) through face-to-face, teleconference and mobile mentoring platforms in the Milwaukee County community. The objective was to sustain and serve as many at-risk youth as</p>		

possible while tracking the types of support they may need in the future, reflecting on accomplishments, success stories, challenges and progress.

The program completed all post-participation surveys of the youth in the program. They collected the survey results into a final report. While the program staff faced obstacles with tracking down some participating youth to complete their surveys, they were able to contact them to receive their feedback.

**Recipient Agency:** Your Move MKE Inc.

**Project Title:** Restorative Justice Rap Album

**Purpose Area:** Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction

**Title II Award Year:** FY2019

**Award Amount:** \$50,000

**Project Period:** 4/1/23-3/31/24

Your Move MKE Inc., used funds to facilitate restorative justice circles with youth and families weekly. These circles were based on specific topics such as: sexual molestation, homicides, racial & ethnic disparities, and more. After discussing these topics for one hour, the second hour was used to create a 4-6 song self-titled project. This project provided a space for families with victims of gun violence, sex trafficking or risk of recidivism, a space to express their feelings and use music to heal from trauma while promoting accountability, reflection, and family interaction through intergenerational encounters. This project was split into two sessions with 32 weeks focusing on circles, songwriting and recording and 16 weeks focused on video production, performances, and promotions. They recruited youth from group homes, including LGBTQ homes, the community, and alternative schools.

Youth engaged in restorative justice cyphers every Thursday from 6-8PM. Those sessions served as a regular space for open discussions, creative expression, and problem-solving, focusing on constructive ways to address and resolve conflicts. A key milestone was the completion of a 6-song album, which participants celebrated with a listening party attended by three circuit court judges, a sergeant, and four police officers. The event showcased the participants' musical talents and helped bridge the gap between the youth and law enforcement, fostering a sense of understanding and mutual respect. The album release party, held at Radio Milwaukee, provided the youth with a broader platform to share their music with friends and families. The public performance was an empowering experience, boosting the participants' self-confidence and giving them a sense of pride in their work. Additionally, the youth reported positive interactions with the police, indicating that these activities played a role in building better relationships within the community. Overall, the events contributed to a more harmonious and cohesive environment, where creativity and restorative justice could thrive.

**Recipient Agency:** Your Move MKE

**Project Title:** Hip Hop Healing Hubs

**Purpose Area:** Racial and Ethnic Disparities Reduction

**Title II Award Year:** FY2021

**Award Amount:** \$50,000

**Project Period:** 10/1/24-9/30/25

The program proposed to hold monthly community hub meetings entitled Hip Hop Healing Hubs. The meetings create a space for intergenerational open discussions on social justice issues and

recent events in the community. The monthly hub meetings focus on fostering safe communities by facilitating difficult conversations that aim to break the stigmas and miscommunications between law enforcement and the community. They are designed to humanize the youth within the systems, creating a platform for open dialogue and understanding. Each two-hour session brings together youth, law enforcement officers, circuit court judges, legislators, and community leaders to foster community and solution-based discussions. The Healing Hubs are an intergenerational space that is vital for several reasons:

- 1) **Diverse Perspectives:** By bringing together different generations, the sessions benefit from a wide range of experiences and viewpoints. Youth share their current challenges and perspectives on social justice, while older generations provide historical context and share lessons learned from past experiences.
- 2) **Building Empathy:** Intergenerational dialogue helps foster empathy and understanding between age groups. Youth often feel misunderstood or dismissed by adults, while adults may struggle to relate to the experiences of younger generations. These discussions create a space where everyone can listen to and learn from each other, breaking down barriers and stereotypes.
- 3) **Community Cohesion:** Involving multiple generations helps build stronger, more cohesive community. It reinforces the idea that social justice issues and community safety are collective responsibilities. When all age groups are engaged, the solutions developed are more likely to be comprehensive and sustainable.
- 4) **Mentorship and Support:** Older participants can offer mentorship and support to younger individuals, guiding them through complex issues and providing encouragement. This support can be crucial for youth navigating challenging situations.
- 5) **Breaking Down Miscommunications:** Miscommunications and misunderstandings between generations can often lead to conflict and mistrust. By facilitating open discussions, these sessions aim to clear up misconceptions and build mutual respect and understanding.

During the most recent cohort, youth explored the topic of aggression and discussed healthier ways to express themselves. The Healing Hubs focused on community engagement events and youth participated in events such as Brat with a Cop and hosted a gathering at the police academy. At the gathering, youth led informational tables on non-aggressive ways to process and express emotions. Many youth entered the cohort with low levels of trust in law enforcement and the justice system, shaped by their lived experiences and perceived biases. However, over the course of just three months, through consistent dialogue and meaningful engagement, their sense of safety and perception of law enforcement showed measurable improvement.

**Recipient Agency:** Your Move MKE Inc

**Project Title:** YMRJ Academy

**Purpose Area:** Delinquency Prevention

Title II Award Year: FY2021	Award Amount: \$58,070	Project Period: 4/1/2024-6/30/25
<p><b>Project Description:</b> Your Move MKE Inc. is dedicated to strengthening their commitment to establishing a secure refuge for youth and families. Functioning as a central hub for intergenerational and innovative programming, their community center is steadfast in providing a nurturing environment where marginalized youth can explore their interests and passions. With the aid of this funding, they extended their programming. Your Move Restorative Justice Academy featured two additional weekly program options. The initiative provided alternative avenues for youth expression and strove to persist as a space of support, healing, understanding, and empowerment for young, underrepresented and vulnerable individuals, thereby fostering enduring positive change in the community. YMRJ Academy actively promoted youth accountability, while their outreach initiatives instilled a prosocial dimension. Their intergenerational and creative program events cultivated a safe community for youth and families. Their key partners are deeply committed to social impact, collectively contributing to the growth of the socioeconomically challenged area the agency serves.</p> <p>The program created a structured and supportive environment for participants to thrive and gain valuable skills. The program launched sessions in music administration. Through the sessions and showcases, youth learned to collaborate on group sets while also developing individual songs and expressing their unique voices. The combination of group and solo projects fostered a sense of teamwork and individual creativity providing youth with training in both performance and self-expression.</p> <p>The program increased youth engagement, skill development, and community presence. Several youth participants completed original songs and performed at public events such as those hosted by the Southside Organizing Center and Grace Weber’s Music Lab, demonstrating increased confidence, public speaking skills, and artistic growth. Youth gained industry knowledge by learning about music licensing and production. The Restorative Justice Healing Circles fostered emotional growth and community accountability, with participants reporting improved communication, empathy, and conflict resolution. The program staff saw early signs of strengthened family engagement through ongoing communication channels like the newsletter and planned intergenerational sessions. One youth currently completing community service through the program shared “I really like it here, it feels welcoming, and it is keeping me out of trouble.” Testimonials like this reinforce that the program created a safe, supportive space where youth feel seen, valued, and motivated to grow. The components collectively support youth in building confidence, career pathways, prosocial behavior, and stronger family and community ties.</p>		

## Tony Maggiore Youth Excellence Award: 2024

The GJJC presents the Tony Maggiore Youth Excellence Award to a remarkable young person in Wisconsin every two years. This award recognizes a young person, having prior contact with the juvenile justice system, that has achieved personal success and has made positive contributions to their community.

The award is in honor of the late, Tony Maggiore, who served on the GJJC for 17 years and was a tireless advocate for people living in poverty. Tony helped wage Milwaukee’s war on poverty for more than 20 years as the Associate Director of the Social Development Commission (SDC). He was an outspoken and steadfast voice to push reforms that would reduce the disparities present in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Tony often described his philosophy as, “You just keep pushing and pushing. You don’t give up.”

Eligible youth are between the ages of 16-28 years old; have been previously under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system; and have made great strides, despite previous involvement in the juvenile justice system, in overcoming obstacles to improve their life and their community.

The GJJC received several strong nominations to the award in 2024 and presented the 2024 Tony Maggiore Youth Excellence Award to Kahmara Kelly.

### WISCONSIN GOVERNOR'S JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION



# Kahmara Kelly

## 2024 Tony Maggiore Youth Excellence Award Recipient

11/12/2024

DATE

*Diane Rondini*

NAME  
GJJC CHAIR

*Aidan Raney*

NAME  
GJJC VICE CHAIR

## **Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission**

Judge Carl Ashley, Milwaukee Co Circuit Court

John Bauman, Retired, former Dane County Juvenile Court Administrator

Ella Bostwick, Certified EMT and Student of Human Services

Dana Brown, Executive Director, Eau Claire Treehouse

Dr. Lesley Chapin, Psychologist

Evelyn Coker, Bureau of Youth Services Director, DCF

Ben Gonring, Assistant State Public Defender, Madison

Charles Greer, Child Welfare Supervisor, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

Meaghan Henry, Executive Director, Canopy Center, Inc.

Lance Horozewski, Division of Juvenile Corrections Administrator, DOC

Andrew Miller, Deputy District Attorney, Dane County District Attorney Office

Muskadee Montano, Tribal Child Welfare Project Coordinator, University of Minnesota Duluth

Sharlen Moore, Director, City of Milwaukee Alder

Edjron Pearson, Juvenile Court Administrator, Dane County

Aidan Raney, Youth Member, Consulting Software Engineer

Dorinthia Robinson, Youth Justice Volunteer

Diane Rondini, Former State Public Defender, Juvenile Justice Advocate

Trevor Strickler, Options & Drive to Succeed Coordinator, Operation Fresh Start

Charles Tubbs, Sr., Director, Dane Co Emergency Management

Emily Zernick, Victim Services Program Manager, WI Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force