

# Juvenile Justice

Draft Summary of Input Gathered

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# Introduction

This draft summary is the product of a six month information gathering process and includes input from hundreds of juvenile justice stakeholders from around the state.

The current status reflects a high-level overview of the input DCF received. It is based on the views of stakeholders who provided input.

The visions for the future are related to DCF's role as well as other system partners.



# Input Gathered: Overview

## Prevention & Diversion

- School collaboration
- Mental health
- Restorative justice

## Assessment & Case Work

- Assessment
- Engagement strategies
- Case planning
- Services
- Dual status youth

## Post-Disposition

- Out of home placements
- Detention
- Accountability
- Aftercare

## DCF Responsibilities

- Practice standards
- Data and outcomes
- Training
- Consultation and technical assistance

# Overarching Considerations

Regardless of substantive area, we need to address the issues below.

- **Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED)**
  - We need to actively work to reduce RED and ensure that our efforts do not unintentionally increase it.
  - Many stakeholders identified the need for training on cultural competency/humility for everyone in the system.
- **Gender/LGBTQ**
  - National research supports the principle that girls and LGBTQ populations have unique needs. Various stakeholders identified need for more services for girls and attention to specific needs of LGBTQ youth.
- **Urban and rural counties**
  - We cannot treat all counties the same. We need to understand the different challenges counties face and cannot use a 'one size fits all' approach.
- **Cross-system collaboration**
  - Cross-system collaboration is going to be critical to all of our work. DCF as state supervisor of the community-based juvenile justice system must collaborate with many other systems in order to improve outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system.

# Prevention & Diversion: School Collaboration

## Current Status

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- Lack of clarity about roles of school resource officers (SROs), school administration and human services.
- Some counties get many referrals from the schools. Perception that some schools are using the juvenile justice system for school discipline (lower-level disorderly conduct charges).
  - Concern that youth incurring criminal charges for school-related misbehavior pushes them out of education system and into juvenile justice.
  - Informal and formal expulsions of delinquent youth highly problematic - no education and no constructive use of time.
- Wide range of approaches to truancy across the state: how soon schools refer truancy cases to human services, and philosophy as to when/how juvenile justice should respond to truancy.

## Vision for Future

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- Clear roles and regular collaboration between school resource officers, schools, and human services.
- Law enforcement only used when appropriate; not for school discipline.
- Schools have an array of approaches to misbehavior that minimize use of exclusionary discipline.
  - Education is available to all youth; even those who are expelled.
- Clear and consistent statewide approach to truancy that diverts youth from JJ and addresses any underlying family system needs contributing to truancy.

# Prevention & Diversion: Mental Health

## Current Status

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- This was identified as an area that is in urgent need of attention. Stakeholders felt mental health services are inaccessible for youth in many parts of the state.
- There is a concern that youth are ending up in the JJ system due to unmet mental health needs. It is often difficult to access services in the community.
- Promising ways to improve access: Some counties are having success with Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) and Coordinated Service Teams (CSTs). Some are beginning to situate mental health services in schools.
- Once youth are in the JJ system, there are often barriers to receiving needed mental health services due to many factors, including insufficient array of services, lack of in-home providers, long waiting periods for getting assessments and shortage of child psychiatrists.

## Vision for Future

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- Youth with mental health needs can access services without entering the juvenile justice system.
- Youth who enter the juvenile justice system can access appropriate and timely in-home and out-of-home mental health services.

# Prevention & Diversion: Restorative Justice

## Current Status

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- The same delinquent act may be referred for restorative justice (RJ) or formally prosecuted depending on the community availability of RJ.
- In pockets around the state, people are using RJ approaches to divert first/second time offenders. They are seeing positive results.
- More schools are using RJ and see it as promising, but it's often underfunded.
- Teen/peer courts are also in pockets around the state - funding has decreased.

## Vision for Future

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- Youth around the state arrested for low level offenses have equal access to diversionary approaches, including RJ.
- RJ approaches used are evidence-informed/based and evidence of effectiveness is measured.
- JJ partners with schools, law enforcement, communities.

# Assessment & Case Work: Assessment

## Current Status

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- Wide variance in how counties approach assessment.
- Majority of counties use an assessment tool. Counties not using a tool are waiting for direction from DCF. This was identified as an urgent need from a large number of stakeholders.
- Counties that use YASI, JAIS, PACT are most passionate about those tools. Counties using COMPAS are most dissatisfied.

## Vision for Future

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- Adopt uniform statewide tool.
  - A uniform assessment tool promotes diversion of low-risk offenders and tailors services to medium and high risk youth.
  - DCF provides free or low cost access to tool which interfaces with eWiSACWIS and helps with case planning.
- Divert lower risk youth and get them services outside of the juvenile justice system.
- Focus on and only serve youth in the juvenile justice system with risk levels that necessitate involvement in the system.



# Assessment & Case Work: Engagement Strategies

## Current Status

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- Counties have diverse approaches to family engagement and many would like guidance on how to better engage with families.
- Some counties have invested in and utilize Motivational Interviewing and are pleased with this evidence-based strategy for engaging with youth and families.
- Some counties use incentives for youth and report success with this approach. There is a desire for expansion/guidance in this area.
- Functional Family Therapy is used by several counties that are pleased with its methodology for engaging families. Some counties already use a family-focused approach in their juvenile justice cases, similar to what is used for child welfare youth and families.

## Vision for Future

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- All workers have the training and tools necessary to engage youth and families successfully.
- Adoption of a case planning model that explicitly involves families.
- Promotion of approaches to engaging families and young people that are incentive and strength-based.

# Assessment & Case Work: Case Planning

## Current Status

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- Counties complete permanency plans for youth in out of home care, but no consistency beyond that.
- Functional Family Case Management (FFCM) is being used by several counties and is a very promising approach.
- Differing belief systems and practices on documentation of information in JJ cases.
- Varying degrees of inclusion of families by agencies in the case planning process.

## Vision for Future

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- Assessment tool flows seamlessly into case planning.
- Case plans can be easily shared between units in a county and between counties.
- Case planning enriches decision making and does not take away from time spent relationship building with youth and families.

# Assessment & Case Work: Services

## Current Status

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- Services available across counties vary significantly.
- Several regional county collaborations have been created to provide services to a more geographically diverse audience.
- Counties would like access to evidence based and promising programs. Some examples:
  - Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF CBT)
  - Carey Guides and BITS.
  - Cognitive Behavioral Thinking curriculum, Thinking for a Change.
  - Mentoring
  - Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
  - Multi-systemic Therapy (MST)
- Urban counties contract out some service provision while rural counties tend to provide services in-house.

## Vision for Future

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- Access to a full range of services for youth and families to effect true behavior and family systems change.
- Statewide access to evidence-based and promising programs and services.

# Assessment & Case Work: Dual Status Youth

## Current Status

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- Coordination of dual system involvement largely depends on individual county's case assignment structure (ie. if workers carry a mixed caseload).
- Lack of common language and measurements to assess actual number of dual status youth in the State.
- Current available data shows high percentage of families are involved in both systems.
- Functional Family Case Management is a promising approach to working with the whole family.
- Many stakeholders encounter information sharing challenges when families have multiple open cases.

## Vision for Future

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- Youth are served in the appropriate system and are not pushed into the juvenile justice system because they reach a certain age or demonstrate a certain behavior.
- Accurate understanding of how/when cases cross over and how/why cases are closed or remain open as dual status.
- Framework for how counties can approach these cases; including information sharing guidelines.

# Post-Disposition: Out of Home Placements (OHP)

## Current Status

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- Shortage of OHPs especially for youth with serious behaviors and/or high level mental health needs.
- Often there is a need for a short-term option to stabilize the home - rarely is there a short-term placement option other than detention.
- Very difficult to find foster homes for JJ youth, particularly those with challenging behaviors or serious mental health needs. Lack of placement options in some communities push kids into more restrictive environments that are farther away.
- Counties that operate their own group homes or shelters for JJ youth have found that effective, and an alternative to detention.

## Vision for Future

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- Youth can stay in their community of origin and get their needs met.
- Sufficient range of OHP options for all populations of youth, particularly those with challenging behaviors and serious mental health needs.
- Short-term OHPs are available in order to stabilize the home and allow placement at home.

# Post-Disposition: Detention

## Current Status

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- Little statewide consistency in how decisions are made to place a youth in secure detention.
  - Several counties use as assessment tool for making custody decisions and have evidence to show that it results in fewer youth being held in detention.
- 72 hour holds are used very frequently in some counties and disallowed in others.
- Use of secure detention varies widely - many counties say they end up using it when there are no other appropriate OHPs available and if there were group homes or shelters, they would use them.
- Programming in detention centers varies widely; often relies on volunteers.
- Visitation rules vary widely and are often restrictive (e.g., no adult other than parent; no contact visits).

## Vision for Future

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- Decisions to hold youth in detention are made consistently statewide, using an evidence-based assessment tool for custody decision making.
- No use of 72 hour holds or placement in secure detention for reasons other than public safety.
- Visitation rules promote long-term positive connections, including contact visits for all youth.
- Detention programming helps youth prepare for successful re-entry into the community (school, work, pro-social connections).

# Post Disposition: Accountability

## Current Status

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- Wide range of approaches to restitution and community service; some counties have strength-based, employment-based ways to earn restitution.
- Many system stakeholders still think of accountability in a punishment framework.
- Victims are largely excluded from the juvenile justice process.
- Many court stakeholders are dissatisfied with 'cookie cutter' court orders (terms of supervision); many youth and families find them difficult to understand and follow.

## Vision for Future

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- All system stakeholders share a vision of accountability that is strength-based and allows youth to truly account for and learn from their mistakes.
- The needs of victims are taken into account and addressed.
- Court orders include a small number of clear terms of supervision that promote positive youth development.

# Post-Disposition: Aftercare

## Current Status

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- Current structure does not support planning for services for youth after their court order expires.
- Some counties are exploring using Family Find to make sure youth have long-term support.
- In a number of counties, approach seems to be to keep young people on supervision longer in order to:
  - Provide services
  - Keep them out of the adult system

## Vision for Future

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- Youth can access needed services when no longer on a court order.
- For youth returning from OHP, services are available to help them re-connect with school, employment, etc.
- Ability to ensure youth have a connection to a caring adult who will be there for them long-term.



# DCF Responsibility: Standards

## Current Status

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- Statutory requirement: Develop standards for the design and delivery of services. Create performance standards.
- Some counties have well-developed written standards; some have none.
- Overall desire for more consistency and guidance.
- Counties are very clear they do not want standards as complex and detailed as the child welfare standards.

## Vision for Future

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- Wisconsin will, over time, develop a set of standards that promote consistency and support evidence-informed practices.
- New standards will be implemented with simultaneous training. System partners will be trained as well.

# DCF Responsibility: Data

## Current Status

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- Statute requires: creation of information systems and monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- No central database for JJ data collection.
- Counties (and system partners) would like to know if what they are doing is working.
- System efficacy cannot be measured without a database.

## Vision for Future

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- Wisconsin will collect and report data on a meaningful set of JJ outcomes.
  - *Agreement that outcomes should be more than just recidivism (see next slide.)*
- Make eWiSACWIS (or its replacement) juvenile justice friendly. Have easy access to data dashboards.
- State level juvenile justice database compatible with assessment and case planning tools (and other databases).
- Continue connecting directly with young people, families and system partners and stakeholders about whether their needs were met.

# Data (continued)

## Which Outcomes Should We Measure?

Based on the input we gathered, people across the state are interested in measuring the following as outcomes of the juvenile justice system:

- Recidivism
  - Some agreement that this should include improvement over time
- Educational attainment
- Employment and skill building
- Mental health service provision
- Connection with caring adults
- Family system strengthened
- Keep youth in the community and/or close to home whenever possible/proper identification and placement for youth
- Meaningful measures of accountability: participation in restorative justice, restitution, community service.
- Community safety

# DCF Responsibility: Training

## Current Status

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- Statutory requirement: 30 hours of intake training.
- WJCIA conference is well-regarded by juvenile justice workers; substance and opportunity to network.
- Lack of juvenile justice specific training options.
- Lack of training available for system partners resulting in inconsistent practices.

## Vision for Future

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- Juvenile justice specific training available for all levels of experience.
- Training is timely, accessible and promotes the use of a common juvenile justice language. Training is coordinated with other system partners.
- Training is designed to lead the way toward more evidence-based and promising programs.
- Training coincides with roll out of new tools or standards.

# DCF Responsibility: Consultation and Technical Assistance

## Current Status

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- Statutory requirement: Provide consultation and technical assistance to aid counties in the implementation and delivery of services.
- Counties appreciate the information that is currently shared about what other counties are doing. They are eager to learn about what is working in other counties and nationally.
- Lack of statewide opportunities to collaborate around JJ.
- DCF working with RFK on Dual Status Youth Training Initiative with Jefferson and Adams counties.

## Vision for Future

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- DCF serves as a conduit of information for the counties about what works locally and nationally.
- More collaboration opportunities across service sectors.
- DCF allows and supports county consortiums and helps smaller counties leverage their resources (e.g., allowing joint applications for funding).

# DCF Next Steps

## December 2016

- Strategic planning and development

## Firs Quarter 2017

- Share plan with partners and stakeholders
- Develop work groups
- Begin planning for policy development and implementation