

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

The most significant change in Wisconsin's child protective services system over the past five years has been the gradual move from 72 local CPS programs, each operating according to its own interpretation of state standards and policies and local community expectations, to a statewide program where all 72 local agencies use the same model of practice, the Wisconsin Model. The development of the statewide automated system (WiSACWIS) accelerated a move toward consistency of practice that had been slowly occurring through development of standards, training, the development of risk assessment and safety assessment tools, and technical assistance to counties who chose to implement the forerunner of the Wisconsin Model (WisRMS). By June 30, 2004, all 71 Wisconsin counties and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) will be on WiSACWIS.

The DCFS position funded by CAPTA, a CPS specialist, has been very involved in many aspects of bringing about this consistency. These include policy and standard development, refinement of tools, development of the ongoing services portion of the Wisconsin Model (family assessment, case plan, and case progress evaluation), curriculum development and training, technical assistance to counties, and technical assistance to the WiSACWIS Project on automating the Wisconsin Model.

Although all counties are now using the same model-- and many of the efforts over the past five years have concentrated on developing policies and standards, developing the model, and increasing knowledge and skills of CPS staff to move toward this level of consistency-- there is still a need to bring greater clarity and specificity to policies, to review and revise the model to reflect new knowledge, and to increase the skills of caseworkers and supervisors to assure greater quality and consistency in decision making. These needs are reflected in the CAPTA Plan for 2004-2009.

Over the past five years, there have been several areas of concentration for program improvement. The areas are:

- A. Safety assessment and planning
- B. Family assessment and case planning
- C. CPS/law enforcement coordination
- D. CPS/DV project
- E. Training for guardians ad litem
- F. Child abuse and neglect prevention
- G. Improving the leadership skills of public child welfare managers
- H. Training for CPS caseworkers and CPS supervisors
- I. Coordinated/integrated service teams in CPS cases
- J. Purpose of the substantiation decision
- K. Citizen Review Panels

A. Safety Assessment and Planning

The *Child Protective Services Investigation Standards* were revised in 1999 and re-issued in January of 2000. The standards included comprehensive instructions and criteria for

safety assessment and safety planning. In 2001, safety protocols and requirements were integrated into the draft of the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*. All of the safety requirements were incorporated into WiSACWIS, the state's automated child welfare system.

Plans to develop safety protocols for assessing the safety of children being placed in out-of-home care, either in licensed facilities or with relatives, were not completed. Although a brief and useful assessment tool was developed and implemented in WiSACWIS, it is not as comprehensive as DCFS believes is necessary to assure safety. The development of a comprehensive and sufficient safety assessment protocol is a planned activity in Wisconsin's PEP.

B. Family Assessment and Case Planning

DCFS began piloting a focused action-oriented approach to family assessment and case planning in 1999. Curricula supporting this approach were also developed and training delivered. However, a change was made in 2000. A county workgroup was established to develop a family assessment format that also provided a consistent way to measure change related to safety and risk of maltreatment that can be applied during the case progress evaluation.

The workgroup also developed a case plan format and case progress evaluation format. Their work was completed between September of 2000 and June of 2001. These became parts of the Wisconsin Model, along with the family assessment, and were automated in WiSACWIS. Training was also developed and delivered to all counties prior to their implementation of WiSACWIS. Throughout this period, the core training course for family assessment and case planning offered by the CW Training Partnerships was modified to reflect the practice and principles in the Wisconsin Model. This is discussed more completely in the section titled Training for CPS Caseworkers and Supervisors.

Because of timeframes driven by WiSACWIS implementation, DCFS needed to implement the ongoing services portion of the Wisconsin Model before it was piloted. In 2003, informal discussions began regarding how the family assessment, in particular, might need to be modified. Opinions expressed included concerns that it might be too unwieldy and broad and not assist in truly focusing on those behaviors and conditions that place children in danger or, conversely, create safe environments. Counties that have Coordinated Service Teams (CST) also raised questions about how the family assessment in the Wisconsin Model fit with the CST assessment and case plan. Several counties implementing both the Wisconsin Model and CST agreed to review the "fit" and make recommendations. In so doing, they also agreed to review whether the family assessment needed to be modified to be more focused and less cumbersome. DCFS will use that information when it formally reviews and revises, if needed, portions of the ongoing services part of the Wisconsin Model.

C. CPS/Law Enforcement Coordination

Efforts to improve coordination between CPS and law enforcement began in 1999. The *CPS Investigation Standards* were revised to emphasize the need for written agreements between CPS and law enforcement. In 2002, a comprehensive *Standard for Collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies* was developed, using input from a workgroup comprised of both CPS and law enforcement personnel. It was issued in 2003. The *Standard* requires that a memorandum of understanding (MOU) be developed and maintained between the CPS and law enforcement agencies. The MOU must address referrals and communication between agencies, joint interviewing practices, and roles and responsibilities of each agency.

Most recently, law enforcement personnel were included in training on family rights as it relates to CPS practice, as well as a discussion about the implications for change in CPS practice recommendations for policy development. Law enforcement staff were included because changes in CPS practice will impact the collaborative procedures of CPS and law enforcement agencies in many counties. A law enforcement training coordinator from the Department of Justice also participated, with the idea that materials from the training on rights of those families involved with CPS will be incorporated into training for law enforcement staff.

D. CPS/DV Project

In October of 2000, the DCFS initiated the Domestic Violence-Child Welfare Collaboration Project. This project brought together a workgroup of practitioners in the domestic violence and child welfare fields to begin a dialogue on effective collaboration. The two primary goals for the project were: 1) to establish principles for domestic violence and child protective services (CPS) intervention that can guide practice for each system individually and serve as the focus for collaboration; and 2) advise the DCFS as to how it can provide leadership for collaborative efforts and good practice in both fields by integrating and promoting these principles.

On January 31, 2001, *Mutual Respect and Common Understandings*, the report of the Domestic Violence-Child Welfare Collaboration Workgroup, was released. The report contained principles and recommendations that can be used as a tool to develop local policies and practice aimed at keeping families safe and stable.

The workgroup established eight philosophical principles that support best practice between the two systems. The principles focus on safety for the child and non-abusing family member together, accountability for batterers, protecting the confidentiality of victims of domestic abuse to the extent possible, and the need to provide a range of responses appropriate to each family's circumstances.

Since the release of the report, the DCFS has carried out activities to help remove barriers and promote collaboration between CPS and DV programs. These activities include:

- Training for each system on the roles, values, policies, needs, and limitations of the counterpart system;
- Regular opportunities for professionals in both systems to meet on a regional basis to discuss areas of mutual concern;
- Technical assistance to foster collaboration on the community level;
- Development of model interagency protocols for local collaboration and service delivery; and
- Development and improvement of state-level policy for better response to families experiencing domestic violence and child maltreatment.

Additionally, training has been provided to judges and court commissioners on the impact of domestic violence on children and identified appropriate interventions.

In 2003, to continue with efforts and provide more specific assistance in the area of collaboration, intensive, site-specific, technical assistance was provided to Harbor House Domestic Abuse Program and the Outagamie County Department of Human Services to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to serve as a model for other programs in the state. The model MOU is being shared statewide.

A series of meetings to promote collaboration between Domestic Violence Programs and Child Protective Services agencies was held in three regions of the state. The first meeting helped programs to get to know their counterpart system and to identify issues of concern. The second meeting provided training and technical assistance on the development of inter-agency agreements.

Two training sessions on "Child Protective Services: Learning the Basics" for domestic violence agency staff were held in May and June.

A workshop on DV-CPS Collaboration with a panel of DV and CPS participants from three different counties was offered at the annual Child Abuse and Neglect Conference in April, 2003.

A workshop on "The Batterer as Parent" was offered at the annual "Through the Eyes of a Child" conference (for child welfare professionals and guardians ad litem) in November 2003.

Consultation and technical assistance on working with counterpart systems on various issues was provided to specific agencies on request.

E. Training for Guardians ad Litem

In November of 1999, the Division co-sponsored the "first annual" conference for guardians ad litem (GALs). The conference was coordinated and co-sponsored by the Division and representatives from the University of Wisconsin, Department of Justice, Director of State Courts, Wisconsin State Bar, and the Wisconsin Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. This conference introduced and highlighted the importance of

cross system understanding and service coordination. Since this time, this conference has become a yearly offering.

The GAL Conference is aimed at professionals whose work impacts the well being of children. Promoting a multi-disciplinary approach to child advocacy, the conference brings together social workers, guardians ad litem, judges, court commissioners, prosecutors, public defenders, therapists, and other professionals. This conference provides for an array of professionals to come together to learn from a variety of experts in the fields of family dynamics, law, child development, child psychology, medicine, and child welfare. The conference focuses on how professionals can work together to ensure that children's needs are met in the context of the Adoption and Safe Families Act. The goal is to provide information and skills to assist professionals in making the best recommendations and decisions possible for children.

Topics pertinent to child safety have always been covered at this conference. Focus has been given to ensure that information provided is applicable to social workers, GALs, and other community partners. Themes and topic areas have been covered over several years, with different focus and depth being provided.

Examples of past conference themes or topics includes:

- Child Protective Services Safety Assessment and Planning.
- Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment
- Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Child Maltreatment Investigation
- Permanency Planning and Concurrent Permanency Planning
- Family Group Decision Making
- Children and Family Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues and Treatment
- The Adoption and Safe Families Act as well as Chapter 48 Case Law and Legislative Updates
- Juvenile Court Procedural Innovations and Issues
- Fatherhood Initiatives
- Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Issues
- Independent Living
- Legal and Practical Issues of Grandparents (and Other relatives) Raising Children
- Indian Child Welfare
- Poverty
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

The Guardian ad Litem conference has been a significant source of training and continues to be well attended, with attendance increasing each year.

F. Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Program (POCAN)

In 1997, new legislation allowed the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) to establish grant-funded Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (POCAN) projects throughout the state. POCAN is designed to serve Medicaid-eligible first-time mothers through home visitation. Nine counties and one tribe were chosen for the POCAN program and receive state funding for local program operation. In addition, technical assistance is provided to agencies. The University of Wisconsin-Extension Family Living Programs received the contract from DCFS to provide and coordinate training and technical assistance for the ten sites. POCAN training and technical assistance was fully funded by CAPTA during 2001, 2002, and 2003.

POCAN Training and Technical Assistance

From POCAN's inception in 1999 through 2003, Family Living Programs conducted 121 training events. These events meant 3,040 contact days with the staff working in the 10 POCAN sites. Overall, the workshops rated 4.1 points out of 5, with 5 being the highest rating.

Areas of training included parent-child interaction, basic and advanced skill training for home visitors, brain development, Medicaid eligibility, Boundaries, Parenting Toddlers, Nutrition for Young Children, and a wide variety of other topics that research and project staff determined to be of value. Several workshops provided knowledge and skills needed to work with families impacted by domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness, and poverty. Supervisors were also offered workshops to improve their ability to support staff.

To aid in program development and implementation and to ensure adherence to best practices, technical assistance was provided. Site visits were conducted, teleconferences were held, and face-to-face meetings for project directors and coordinators were held.

During this time, three curricula were written, piloted, and offered. One is a three-day basic skills workshop for home visitors, which is based on research describing a good home visitor. Two are workshops that help staff understand and work with people in generational poverty. All three workshops consistently earn the highest ratings.

Long-term evaluations of the basic skills workshop show that following the training, attendees did apply the knowledge and skills in their work. As a result of the training, program practices changed due to the exposure to family development principles; newly learned communication skills were used with families; visitors encouraged helpful outside relationships and referred families to community agencies for support; visitors encouraged mothers to involve fathers in parenting; visitors improved their ability to plan with families; and visitors improved their skills in boundary setting, confidentiality, and personal safety.

POCAN Evaluation

A recent evaluation by the DHFS showed that children in the POCAN programs were 30% more likely to be immunized and half as likely to go to the emergency room. There were only one quarter as many reports of abuse or neglect and one quarter as many out of home placements.

A qualitative evaluation of the training component of POCAN was conducted as part of the larger evaluation. Among the findings:

- Face-to-face meetings for technical assistance provided valuable opportunities to receive clarification from state consultants and to network and learn from each other.
- Workshops raised awareness of, sensitivity to, and ability to address issues with which families struggle, such as depression, mental illness, domestic violence, substance abuse, and poverty.
- The basic skills workshop set a firm stage for strength-based work, ability to identify resources, and ways to engage and partner with families for positive outcomes for the child.
- Workshops enhanced staff understanding of child development and attachment and provided ways to help families understand and support their child's development.
- Attendance at workshops increased staff's confidence in their abilities and gave them the skills and tools to be successful with families.
- The workshops provided access to the latest research and trends and provided theoretical and practical strategies for working with families.
- Program quality was improved because research-based workshops imparted best practice standards, changes were made in supervision methods, increased attention was given to child development, and staff learned creative techniques for working with families.

Among the comments received on the evaluation:

- "My POCAN staff's growth and development has far exceeded the normal development of my Social Work staff who normally enter the field with minimal information in the area of child growth and development and therefore are only a coordinator of service rather than a provider."
- "Our program would not be what it is today without all the training offered to our staff."
- "The trainings were relevant, interesting and beneficial. There were always efforts made to anchor the learning through activities or practice."
- "POCAN has offered some of the best trainings I've attended in my seven years of supervising."

One of the twelve best practice standards that POCAN programs are expected to adhere to is: "Provide staff with intensive training specific to family assessment and home visitation." Evaluators recognized the value of the training component of POCAN and recommended the continuation of the training with any program expansion as training is an integral support to assure quality programs and services for families.

Review of 2003 Activities

In order to support the effectiveness of the program, CAPTA funds were used to provide ongoing training and technical assistance for those involved in providing services for the local programs.

Approximately 460 training contacts were made in 2003, through various trainings.

Trainings provided in 2003 included:

- 3 3-day sessions of Home Visitation: The Basics
- 2 1-day sessions on use of the HOME Early Childhood Assessment Tool
- Parenting Toddlers
- Maintaining Personal and Professional Boundaries
- Empowerment Skills for Supervisors
- Parent-Infant Interaction for beginning home visitors
- 2 1-day sessions on listening and other skills that promote change
- Nurturing Parent-Child Interaction
- Parental Guidance for Young Children
- Breastfeeding and Nutrition for Young Children
- 2 1-day sessions on strategies for working with people in poverty
- 2-day conference: Fulfilling the Promise: A Conference for Wisconsin's Home Visitation Programs

The workshops averaged a 4.1 rating on a 5 point scale with 5 being the highest.

In addition, two technical assistance meetings were held for project coordinators and project managers.

In 2003, a new curriculum on strategies for working more effectively with families in generational poverty was developed and piloted. The home visitor basic skills curriculum was revised.

Beginning in FY 2005, the POCAN training program will be funded with IV-B Subpart II funds rather than CAPTA.

G. Improving the Leadership Skills of Public Child Welfare Managers

The DCFS recognizes that public child welfare administrators need assistance to carry out their critical leadership roles. In addition, training for child welfare staff is understood to be more than just change in the knowledge and skills possessed by staff persons, but also the springboard for organizational change, requiring actions by the agency administration.

In 1999, the DCFS offered the first Public Child Welfare Conference in the state. The conference is for administrators, managers, and supervisors in Wisconsin's public child welfare system. The conference provides an opportunity to update child welfare program managers in Wisconsin on national developments in child welfare practice, as well as to

discuss and plan new initiatives in our state. Although first designed to include child welfare staff from county, public human/social service agencies, it quickly changed focus to include other community partners who serve families in the public child welfare system.

Traditionally a two-day conference, the 2004 conference expanded to include another day designed specifically to be an interactive experience for supervisors to support them in addressing day to day practice issues related to child safety. The day concluded with a statewide meeting to discuss and refine policy developed as a result of new CAPTA requirements.

The agenda for each year's conference is determined based on the needs of administrators, program managers, and supervisors to provide leadership and assure the quality of decision making and positive outcomes for children and families. Each year attendance at the conference increases, with approximately 175 people participating in 2004.

The next annual Public Child Welfare Conference will be held in 2005. The content of the conference will continue to support the knowledge, skills, and values critical to successful leadership within child welfare agencies.

H. Training for CPS Caseworkers and Supervisors

Training Curriculum Updates

Most of the training received by CPS caseworkers and supervisors is provided by the four Child Welfare Training Partnerships, funded in part with CAPTA monies and whose curricula are determined through the Training Council and its Curriculum Committee, in which DCFS staff participate.

Wisconsin imported training curriculum out of Ohio from the Institute of Human Services (IHS). Over the last several years, Wisconsin has gone through a process of significantly revising some of the IHS CORE curricula. Revisions have been made to reflect new knowledge and research in the field, to include safety assessment and planning, and to reflect current practice in Wisconsin. There have been two CORE courses that have been revised: *Family Centered Child Welfare Services* and *Family Centered Case Assessment and Planning*. More detailed information follows.

Core 103: Family-Centered Child Welfare Services

This training was originally three days in length. It covered such topics as the historical, philosophical, and legal basis for child welfare, the identification and assessment of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, risk assessment, developing knowledge about culture and cultural diversity, intake and screening of referrals, initial assessment/investigation, family-centered services and the role of the caseworker. There is no specific tool or assessment model taught or used in this training. Wisconsin does have specific tools and documentation formats used during the entire case process, referred to as the Wisconsin

Model. The decision was made to revise this CORE training to incorporate Wisconsin's specific laws, policies, tools, and formats. It was further decided to break out and expand on topic areas for this training, making it two separate trainings.

The CORE foundational level training is a two-day training designed for all child welfare caseworkers, regardless of job functions. *Family Centered Child Welfare Services* provides the conceptual foundation for public child welfare services. Content on the history and philosophy of child welfare explores child protection as a function of public agencies, emphasizing a strength-based, family centered approach. Content on culture examines the components of and influences on culture, including social class. This content emphasizes the need for individualization when working with families and reflection on the influence of the caseworker's cultural assumptions. Content on integration of helping and authority roles explores the need for both of these roles and their thoughtful integration in order to perform child welfare responsibilities. This training provides the conceptual basis for assessing child safety, including qualities of safe environments and parental protective capacity; criteria for assessing a child to be unsafe; the difference between risk and safety; and observational skills and assessment tools. Content on caseworker safety alerts participants to risks to their own safety and offers practical skills to maximize their safety in the field and in the office.

The next phase of the revisions/development will focus on training specific to the process of intake and initial assessment.

Core 104: Family Centered Case Assessment and Planning

This four day CORE training session was revised to include Wisconsin specific information related to the Wisconsin Model of family assessment, case planning, case evaluation, and case closure. The training also stresses the importance of proper case planning to assure timely, high quality services to families. It presents casework as the preferred intervention method to promote strengthening of families, permanence, and well being for children and positive change. The training also includes: (1) Strategies to engage family members in collaborative relationships which empower family members, and promote family preservation and prominence for children; and (2) Methods for conducting case reviews with families and writing concise, timely assessments and case plan information, with supporting documentation, into the family case record.

Safety Assessment and Planning Training Updates

As this is the core and critical aspect of all CPS work, training in the area of safety assessment and planning has been offered over the past 12 years in this state. Training sessions have been offered regularly by the CW Training Partnerships. As county agencies prepared to implement WiSACWIS and, therefore, the Wisconsin Model, an assessment was done as to whether agency staff needed updated training on assessing safety and developing safety plans. Training was provided to each county as needed.

In 2003, two county agencies were involved in a case where a young child who, with this family, was receiving ongoing CPS services was battered to death. A review by DCFS staff and others concluded that staff of both agencies needed additional training in developing sufficient safety plans and understanding how safety must be managed and reassessed during ongoing services. A two-day training to assist staff and supervisors was developed by ACTION for Child Protection and delivered in September of 2003 to the two involved counties and a neighboring county. This was the beginning of revisions in safety training that are currently underway and are discussed in the five-year Plan.

Annual Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

The 17th annual Wisconsin Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect took place in April of 2004. This conference has a long tradition of being multi-disciplinary in its focus. The conference encouraged persons in the fields of CPS, law enforcement, public health and medicine, domestic violence, law, education, prevention, and advocacy to come together to discuss joint issues and solutions. DCFS is a co-sponsor and participates each year on the planning committee.

Staff from the DCFS presented at this year's conference on Wisconsin's federal Child and Family Services Review. Findings from the review as well as preliminary plans towards improvement of the system were shared.

The 18th annual Wisconsin Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect is planned for April, 2005.

I. Coordinated/Integrated Service Teams in CPS Cases

The coordinated or integrated services team initiative began in 1999 with exploration as to how to communicate and coordinate better across disciplines, in order to provide better services to children and families. The participating systems include child welfare, AODA, mental health, developmental disabilities, schools, and Wisconsin Works (TANF program). Beginning in Milwaukee and with BMCW, the initiative has expanded over the past five years to a number of counties. The major objective is collaboration of service planning, development, and delivery that meets the needs of each family engaged in multiple services and systems, specifically child welfare, substance abuse, Wisconsin Works, and mental health. The model also emphasizes a strengths-based approach and strong family involvement in case planning and progress evaluation.

CAPTA funds have not been put directly into the program, but DHFS staff funded by CAPTA have provided technical assistance in identifying issues that need to be clarified, helping to develop a clear focus on safety that is consistent with CPS standards, and also by participating in cross-training activities. This involvement will continue.

J. Purpose of the Substantiation Decision

Concerns about the purpose of substantiating child abuse and neglect began in 1999. This came about in part because the substantiation decision began to be used to deny persons access to certain employment and licensure, although it was not originally intended to be used for that purpose. This was compounded by concerns about the accuracy of substantiation decision making, which varies from county to county.

In 1999, a comprehensive policy was issued to guide in the case finding (e.g., substantiated, unsubstantiated) decision making. However, concerns about accuracy continued. In 2000, a survey was conducted of all counties to assess substantiation decision making. A set of scenarios were developed, and county staff were asked whether they would substantiate child abuse or neglect, assuming all of the information was correct. The result was a significant amount of variation in decisions. As this survey was conducted in regional meetings, county supervisors were able to hear the differences among the counties and became more concerned with the differences. The appeals process, instituted in October of 1998, also raised concerns among counties as to how the substantiation decision is made and whether everyone was using the same criteria.

At the same time, counties began to question why so much time, effort, and expense were put into making and defending the substantiation decision. Some CPS professionals began questioning the usefulness of the substantiation decision, especially since the *CPS Investigation Standards* placed little emphasis on the substantiation decision and much more emphasis on assessing safety and risk. Many others, including those in the broader child protection system, however, continued to believe that the substantiation decision was important.

Over the past several years, the DCFS, in conjunction with county staff, has continued to emphasize the safety decision and marginalize the substantiation decision in the development of policies and standards. The *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*, issued in 2002, established the standard that all families where a child was determined to be unsafe, not children determined to be substantiated, must be opened for ongoing services. Other groups began questioning the substantiation decision. The Executive Steering Committee for the CFSR raised the issue and, more recently, the PEP Core Team also raised the issue and questioned the purpose and usefulness of the substantiation decision.

Progress in this area has been intentionally slow to give everyone the opportunity to come to the same point of openness to explore the purpose and usefulness of the substantiation decision. With support from county managers and others, such as the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work, a significant initiative to study substantiation is planned for the coming year.

K. Citizen Review Panels

In response to the federal CAPTA requirements for states to establish Citizen Review Panels (CRP), Wisconsin established two county panels and one panel with individuals representing each of the counties in a judicial district. The state asked for counties to volunteer and three proposals were selected: Marathon County, Outagamie County and the counties in the 7th Judicial District. The multi-county panel was to be a pilot project.

Extensive training and education was provided to the Panel members, both in terms of the role of Citizen Review Panels and child welfare legislation, policy and practice. The CRP in Outagamie and Marathon counties are multi-functional and, in addition to their role as a Citizen Review Panel, they provide essential input to the local county child welfare agency. Among the areas they also address are: helping to improve coordination and collaboration among various public and private entities that provide programs and services to the children and families of their county; and identifying community needs and working to educate the community. Because of the size of the 7th Judicial District Panel, it limited its focus to CRP issues.

For a variety of reasons, the pilot panel in the 7th Judicial District did not work out. The primary issues related to participation and focus. However, LaCrosse County, the largest county in the Judicial District volunteered to establish a panel and share information with the other counties. The new panel has been established and has been going through an orientation phase.

Several state staff are working with the panels and have scheduled a series of meetings to work with them ensure appropriate implementation of the new CAPTA requirements and also to complete plans for their participation in Wisconsin's PEP implementation. Plans for the future also include the addition of a fourth citizen review panel in Milwaukee County. This is currently under development to comply with CAPTA and offer important citizen support and participation in Milwaukee county child welfare.

The CY 2003 Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports are attached the plan.

**Independent Living - Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and
Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program**

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program provides statewide services and support for youth in and exiting out-of-home care in accordance with the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. This report addresses Sec. 477 (42 U.S.C. 677) (a) of the Social Security Act as required for the final report.

Data provided throughout this final report were compiled for the state's most recent reporting period, January 1 - December 31, 2003. Wisconsin does not have an electronic database system for capturing and reporting independent living (IL) data. Accuracy of the data in this report is dependent upon each agency's interpretation of the IL eligibility and program criteria and the manual recording and calculation of demographic and services data. It is anticipated that the quality of IL data and reporting will improve when federal reporting requirements are finalized and these requirements are implemented via the Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (WISACWIS).

Wisconsin is a county-administered system and programs may vary in their approaches to implementing and administering independent living services. This report attempts to summarize all local efforts, providing a generalized accounting of services design and outcomes. State activities are also noted and described where appropriate.

The following sections provide detailed data and descriptions of CFCIP plan goal progress, specific program accomplishments, barriers encountered, and the progress made toward the purposes of 1-6 of Section 477(a). These descriptions also assure that CFCIP plan certifications were upheld.

1. Identification of children likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and provision of transitional support.

In 2001, the provision of independent living services for youth in and exiting foster care became mandated for all counties and tribes providing child welfare and child protective services in Wisconsin. Prior to this time, only 46 counties and 2 tribes were operating formal independent living programs designed to assist youth with achieving self-sufficiency upon leaving out-of-home care placement. As of 2001 to the present, 71 counties, 2 tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections receive funding to serve all youth eligible for IL services.

Wisconsin's definition of eligibility for independent living services includes youth in out-of-home care placement for at least six months after the age of 15 years and up to the age of 21. Youth in out-of-home care and adopted after the age of 15 are also eligible. Youth participation in the IL program is voluntary.

The following table demonstrates Wisconsin's progress in identifying and serving these youth:

Table A. Program Participants

Calendar Year	Total Eligible Youth	Total Youth Receiving Services	18-21 year-olds Receiving Services	Tribal Youth Receiving Services
2000	2019	1273	Unknown	Unknown
2001	3642	1801	Unknown	Unknown
2002	3982	3383	769	132
2003	4326	3123	678	116

The following table contains data available on most of the youth receiving services in 2003:

Table B. Participant Demographics

Category	Number of Youth	Percentage
Demographic data available	2,883	100
Female	1,471	51
Male	1331	46
White	1447	50
African American	1153	40
American Indian	102	4
Asian	45	2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5	Less than 1
Latin/Hispanic	139	5
Other Race	79	3
Mental health disabilities	389	13
Developmental disabilities	130	5
Learning disabilities	546	19
Other disabilities	185	6
Never married	2,851	99
Youth who are Parents	300	10

The majority (i.e., 1,912 out of 3,123 IL participants) of youth receiving IL services in Wisconsin is in out-of-home care placement. Some other types of living arrangements experienced by IL eligible youth during the report period (CY 2003) are listed below.

Table C. Living Arrangements

Living Arrangement	# of Youth
Out-of-Home Care placement	1,912
Homeless	99
Adult Correctional Facility	78
Juvenile Correctional Facility	186
Subsidized Housing	31
Transitional Housing	80
Independent Living	328

The goals of Wisconsin's Independent Living Program are to help youth achieve higher rates of adequate shelter, educational attainment, employment and employment stability, healthy relationships, and financial independence. In addition, the state will see lower rates of incarceration, public assistance utilization, and physical and sexual victimization. All youth will receive developmental skills training and independent living preparation services appropriate to their age and development. Services are designed to assure their capacity to exercise judgment commensurate with their age, abilities, and strengths and needs. All youth aged 16 and older exiting out-of-home care will leave care with a minimum of the following:

- Driver's license or preparation for obtaining a driver's license or other access to transportation to school, employment, and other critical activities;
- High school diploma or GED or enrollment in an educational program designed to result in a high school diploma or GED;
- Written employment history;
- Copies of their birth certificate, social security card, and medical records;
- Access to funds adequate to support themselves for a period of three months following exit from care;
- Access to and knowledge of local resources, including but not limited to food pantries, human service agencies, health clinics, and mental health facilities; and
- A safe and stable living environment.

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that 100% of these agencies are providing an array of services designed to help youth achieve independence and self-sufficiency. Agencies must submit an annual updated work plan describing current and following year IL services and report annually on the progress achieved and challenges addressed.

The total number of youth receiving services for CY 2003 is 3,123. Data was provided to the State from the local agencies on 2,883 of these youth. The following table identifies the services received and the total number of youth that received each service during the report period:

Table D. Independent Living Services & Participants

Service Received	# of Youth
Secondary Education	1706
Post Secondary Education	281
Vocational & Employment Support	1459
Daily Living Skills	2091
Budget & Financial Management	1635
Housing Assistance	666
Youth Development	1099
Mentor	814
Health Education & Prevention	1373
Sex Education	1777
Mental Health	1616
AODA	462
Financial & Medical Assistance	2203

In addition to the services reported here, efforts to inform agencies, provide technical assistance, address program-related issues, and strengthen IL services for youth and their families have been ongoing since 2001.

The DCFS issued DCFS Memo Series 2001-06, dated April 11, 2001, to all counties and tribes mandating the provision of independent living services for youth in and exiting out-of-home care placement. The memo provided all agencies with IL eligibility criteria for youth, levels of local funding, and directed programs to develop services in accordance with the Wisconsin June 2000 task force report, *Independent Living for Children in Out-Of-Home Care*. The task force report summarizes the research, "Foster Youth Transitions to Adulthood: Outcomes 12 to 18 Months After Leaving Out-Of-Home Care," conducted by Mark E. Courtney and Irving Piliavin, and provides recommendations as to how the current child welfare system can achieve measurable improvements.

In addition to the memo announcing the program, statewide memos issued by DCFS continue to be a key source of IL updates, information, and direction for local agencies.

The DCFS Memo 2001-06 was followed by Independent Living Roundtable meetings in 2001. These meetings were and continue to be held each year in various parts of the state to discuss IL policies, regulations, funding, and practice issues. Each meeting is designed to allow ample time to address any questions or issues that occur at the local level. Meetings are facilitated by the State Independent Living Coordinator and attended by county and tribal independent living coordinators, private agencies contracted to provide IL services, the Department of Corrections IL worker, Assistant Area Administrators for Regional Offices, and other interested parties. These meetings update caseworkers on state and federal policies and regulations, help train caseworkers regarding current and effective IL services and supports, and allow agencies to share best practice information through discussion of current cases and IL issues.

Development and implementation of IL training was initiated in 2001 and continues through the present. New training was created and some existing curricula (e.g., foster parent training) were reviewed and revised to include a component on IL. Training has included: Life Skills Development through the National Resource Center for Youth Development and NEW Partnership for Children and Families; Independent Living Basic Training by the State IL Coordinator; Engaging, Empowering, Emancipating; Working Together; and Assessing and Assisting the Adolescent by Norma Ginther and the Southern Child Welfare Training Partnership. In addition, IL meetings have been convened to address specific topics of interest, such as Planning and Preparing Youth for Higher Education presented by the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group.

2. Help youth receive education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment

Since implementation of Wisconsin's IL Program in 2001, annual reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections show that 100% of these agencies are assisting youth in the areas of education, training, and employment related services.

All youth are assessed for independent living skills functioning, including job search and maintenance. These assessments, along with youth input, are utilized in developing employment related goals for the Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP).

The methods for helping youth with employment related services vary according to program and area of the state. Rural programs may not have access to as many community resources as are found in urban areas of the state. The IL Coordinator may be the trainer or service provider, or he/she may serve in an outreach and referral capacity, connecting youth to local resources already providing the needed services.

IL Coordinators conducting training and experiential learning report employment related activities that include assisting youth with: procuring of necessary documents, completing applications, education planning, contacting colleges and employers, interview skills, job search, resume writing, social skills on the job, tolerance, conflict management and resolution, transportation, and gaining volunteer and other work related experience. Community awareness trips and speakers on employment related services and topics are often utilized. Meetings are arranged with high school counselors and tutors to help assess youth educational needs for employment and provide a support network for youth.

Referral and outreach efforts link youth to community agencies and resources for job seeking, training, and financial assistance. These connections may include typical job service programs, such as Job Corps, local job centers, Workforce Resource Center, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, job fairs, and other community agencies and private providers. Other linkages may address individual youth needs (e.g., counseling services, medication management) which may impact employment success.

The total number of youth participating in IL services in CY 2003 is 3,123. Data is available for 2,883 of these youth. The following table indicates the number of participants that received vocational related assistance during the report period:

Table E. Vocational Services

Type of Service/Assistance	# of Youth Receiving Service
Secondary Education	1,706
Post Secondary Education	281
Vocational & Employment Support	1,459
Paid or unpaid training	49
Unemployment compensation	5
Youth currently employed	496
Average wage = \$5.30	
Driver's education completed	218
Driver's license achieved	181

3. Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and education institutions

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that 100% of these agencies are assisting youth in the area of post-secondary education and training.

Education is vital to successful functioning in the adult world; however, youth living in out-of-home care are completing high school and participating in post-secondary education at significantly lower rates than youth who were not placed outside of their homes. In 2001, DCFS tackled this challenge by soliciting the help of the higher education community. Professionals from child welfare, private colleges, technical colleges, and the state university joined forces to help foster care youth access and achieve post-secondary education and training. The collaborating group became known as the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth (HEOY) Advisory Group.

The HEOY Advisory Group met, planned, and devised several approaches to address the educational challenges faced by foster care youth. Informational memos were developed and disseminated statewide to inform child welfare and juvenile justice caseworkers about the HEOY group and share contact information for group members. Higher education resource materials were developed for statewide dissemination. A panel and presentation were created to increase awareness about the youth, problems, and solutions and presented to child welfare caseworkers, various levels of higher education staff, foster parents, and other interested parties across the state. These workshops provide information about:

- The educational challenges faced by children placed outside of their homes;
- How to utilize school counselors as a resource for assisting and motivating youths to attend post-secondary vocational and education programs;

- How to help youths and families access state university and private college services and education;
- DCFS scholarship program and dissemination of application forms;
- Brochures and informational handouts for post secondary education; and
- Education and Training Vouchers Program guidelines

Additional HEOY activities and accomplishments include:

- In 2001, Marian College of Fond du Lac developed a Foster Care Grant specifically for youths previously placed in out-of-home care.
- Development and dissemination of DCFS Information Memo 2002-05 - This memo informs county and tribal child welfare agencies about the educational issues faced by youths in and exiting out-of-home care placement. It also informs them of the development of the HEOY group and provides a resource document, "Let's Get These Kids in College!" also developed by the advisory group.
- In 2002, the DCFS Scholarship fund was utilized at 100% for the first time.
- In 2003, DCFS Scholarship awards increased to \$110,000
- In 2004, the DCFS Scholarship fund increased to \$125,000
- The required parent signature was removed from the University of Wisconsin college application form.

The DCFS has a scholarship program that is funded with CFCIP funding. The program provides scholarship awards for IL eligible youth that have been accepted into an institution of higher education. The first years of the scholarship allowed one time only awards up to \$2,500. In 2004, this criterion was revised to allow subsequent awards up to \$5,000 per youth annually. As of May 2004, over \$125,000 has been expended and the DCFS is seeking additional ways to fund this program.

The following table summarizes scholarship awards during the past three years:

Table F. DCFS Scholarship Program

Year	# of Scholarship Awards	Amount of Scholarship Awards
2001	30	\$ 55,619
2002	52	\$ 87,545
2003	54	\$ 109,250

Agencies report various methods for working with youth and families to help youth achieve higher education and training. The IL Coordinators initiate many of the post-secondary-related activities. Lac du Flambeau tribe reports having a Tribal Education Department to which youth can be referred, but generally it is the IL Coordinator taking the lead to ensure youth are aware of and participate in activities dedicated to post-secondary opportunities.

Preparation for post-secondary education must begin several years prior to high school completion. Individual education plans containing individualized goals and objectives are developed for each youth. Coordinators work with high school teachers and counselors to ensure that classes and credits are meeting the necessary requirements for post-secondary admission. Where available, youth are connected to precollege programs.

Programs designed to address youth needs in accessing and achieving higher education consist of helping youth with: visiting colleges, applying for admission and financial aide, finding resources available in the community and on campus, obtaining subsidies for educational and training supplies, and dealing with other costs associated with college and training. Caseworkers assist youth with finding safe and stable housing, including individualized efforts to secure housing with relatives or other trusted adults in the area. They also provide ongoing emotional support to youth prior to and while attending the post-secondary institutions.

The following table indicates services delivered and some educational outcomes achieved in 2003.

Table G. Educational Services and Achievements

Service Provided or Educational Outcome	# of Youth
Secondary Education services	1,706
Post Secondary Education services	281
Driver's education completed	218
Driver's license achieved	181
GED achieved	127
High School Diploma	279
Vocational Certificate or License	46
Associate Degree	2
Bachelor's Degree or higher	0
DCFS Scholarships awarded	54

4. Provide personal and emotional support through mentors and promotion of interaction with dedicated adults

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that 100% of these agencies are attempting to connect youth with mentors and other caring adults in their communities. The total number of youth connected to mentors for the report period is 814. The most commonly cited connections for youth are foster parents, biological family members, teachers, social workers, IL coordinators, and mentors.

Independent living coordinators take the lead in connecting youth to caring adults. Many natural connections (e.g., biological family, foster parents, special education teachers,

social workers) occur and are encouraged. For youth that do not readily develop significant connections with adults in their lives, the coordinators assist youth with creating and sustaining such relationships. IL coordinators help youth identify potential adults in their lives and then work with them to build communication and relationships. The Independent Living Transition Plan requires that names and contact information be recorded for peers or adults identified by youth.

Youth in out-of-home care are often connected to mentors, and these relationships usually continue after the youth leaves care. Mentors may be individuals in the community or obtained through community agencies that provide this support service. Support teams may also be utilized for increasing youth connections to others. Tribal IL coordinators may coordinate with other programs within the tribe to connect youth to adults.

5. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services for former foster care youth aged 18-21 years. Ensure youth participation and personal responsibility for preparation and transition.

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare indicate that 100% of these agencies have developed services for IL eligible youth aged 18-21 years. The number of 18-21-year-olds receiving services during the report period is 678. These youth received room and board assistance in the amount of \$87,815.

Agencies report varying methods for engaging and serving youth aged 18-21 years that have left out-of-home care placement. Programs strive to provide youth with life history and critical documents (e.g., birth certificate, social security cards, insurance cards) prior to leaving care. Many youth maintain contact with former social workers, case managers, or IL coordinators. Other youth refuse to continue contact with anyone associated with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. All youth are provided with information about community resources (e.g., food, economic assistance, housing assistance, counseling) prior to leaving care. They are encouraged to maintain regular contact with caseworkers; however, crisis support is available to all youth.

Services and support for 18-21-year-olds may be provided through the agency and IL Coordinator; however, some agencies contract with private agencies to serve this older population. In Milwaukee County, all youth aging out of care are referred to Lad Lake Connections Program. This private agency provides financial, housing, counseling, employment, and other needed services to former foster care youth. Lad Lake staff work closely with and build positive, familiar relationships with youth. A food pantry is also available on site. Children's Service Society of Wisconsin is another agency with which several counties (e.g., Dunn, Forest, Marquette) contract for IL services.

Outreach efforts to contact youth who have left care are ongoing and moderately successful. The most frequent contact methods used for youth that have left care include letters to the youth and telephone calls to friends, family, and other youth acquaintances. Two larger counties, Milwaukee and Dane, utilize Independent Living newsletters to maintain contact and keep youth informed about available services and assistance.

Agencies report that ongoing contact and relationship building with youth while in out-of-home-care placement increases the likelihood of continued contact, relationships, and assistance after leaving care. All programs report instances of youth leaving care and refusing further assistance or contact with anyone connected to the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.

Services typically include financial assistance for youth who have left care. Financial assistance generally includes providing youth with funds or stipends to help pay for rent, utilities, car insurance, health insurance, household furnishings, drivers licenses, and employment and educational expenses. CFCIP funds are often utilized for these types of expenses.

Youth with disabilities or challenging behaviors may need specialized services and supports to help them achieve individual levels of self-sufficiency. IL Coordinators and caseworkers ensure that, where appropriate, youth are referred and connected to Long-Term Support Programs for mental health, supportive living arrangements, supported employment, ongoing daily needs, mentoring, and other special needs.

Each eligible youth in out-of-home care must have an Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) that is based on an independent living skills assessment and incorporated into the permanency plan. Each youth exiting out-of-home care after the age of 17 years must have an ILTP that addresses the youth's transition from out-of-home care, identifies ongoing independent living needs and outcomes, and describes how ongoing independent living needs will be met. Youth must participate directly in the development of their plan goals and activities and accept personal responsibility for gaining skills and independence.

The plans, services, and activities should address, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- High school education, post secondary education, or training
- Career planning and employment
- Safe and stable housing
- Transportation
- Health and medical care
- Knowledge/use of community resources and support systems
- Financial self-sufficiency
- Youth's self goals

The Independent Living Transition Plan and activities should include:

- Measurable goals and objectives
- Experiential training for youth where possible
- Identification of community resources available and utilized
- A description of how youth will participate in plan development and activities

6. Make available vouchers for post-secondary education and training

Wisconsin did not receive Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program approval or funding until late 2003 although efforts to help youth access and achieve higher education have been ongoing since 2001. See item (3) for detailed information about higher education for youth.

Wisconsin's ETV Program was designed and implemented through a collaborative process facilitated by the State Independent Living Coordinator. Independent Living Coordinators throughout the state were surveyed regarding their experiences with IL services and higher education. They were asked to identify potential services, equipment, and other items that would benefit youth accessing and participating in higher education and training programs. A meeting was held with the HEOY Advisory Group to gather input about the pending ETV Program and the ongoing DCFS Scholarship Program. All of this input was incorporated into the Federal Application for ETV Program funding and state ETV Program Guidelines.

The ETV Program was implemented on January 1, 2004. All counties, two tribes, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare received ETV funding to locally support and assist youth with post-secondary related activities and costs. The DCFS Scholarship Program funding was increased to \$125,000 for scholarship awards in 2004. Data for ETV Program youth, services, and expenditures and other educational outcomes will not be available until the end of calendar year 2004.

7. Barriers

IL services were implemented in all counties statewide. Services are designed to address the CFCIP plan goals and objectives, the June 2000 *Independent Living for Children In Out-Of-Home Care* report, the Chafee Act, and individual youth needs. Several barriers to achieving desirable outcomes in all areas for all youth were encountered. Some barriers such as geographic challenges are consistently noted across agencies in rural communities. Other commonly reported challenges for many agencies involve funding and youth. A summary of these barriers follows:

- It is difficult to monitor and support the needs of youth leaving care that relocate to other counties and states. The 18-21-year-olds are a transient group and maintaining contact is difficult.
- Many youth are resistive to agency involvement. They are not motivated and refuse to participate in IL activities. Some do not desire or see the need to pursue higher education.
- Youth with cognitive delays and emotional challenges are difficult to serve effectively as are youth with multiple legal infractions.

- In some rural communities there is a lack of employment opportunities, transportation, service providers, and community resources, all of which are critical to providing quality IL support and helping youth become self sufficient.
- Some foster parents and other caregivers may not see it as their responsibility to help youth gain IL skills. Life skills development is seen as an extra burden and they refuse to participate in training.
- Some agencies refuse to allow youth to participate in driver's education and obtain drivers licenses while in care. The commonly cited reason for this is concern about liability to the agency or foster parents.
- There is a lack of health care options for youth leaving care after 18 years of age.
- There is a lack of housing options for 17-year-olds who do not or will not remain in OHC placement.
- Agencies report ongoing service challenges due to a lack of sufficient IL funding to support their programs. In addition to a lack of IL funding, decreases in IL services may also occur due to agency budget cuts where other funds were used to support these services for youth. Lack of resources also contributes to a lack of staff support and higher staff turnover.

Tribal Child Welfare

Tribal Child Welfare in Wisconsin

In conjunction with the Tribal Affairs Unit of the Department, the DCFS has several ongoing practices to ensure effective communication with the 11 recognized tribes in Wisconsin and to support tribal child welfare services. The DCFS gives funding directly to the tribes through the Consolidated Family Services Allocation, which eliminates individualized funding streams and assists tribes in providing services to families. The DCFS consults with tribes before issuing standards and policies addressing child welfare concerns and involves tribal staff on interview panels for state staff positions. Tribes receive TANF funding for the Kinship Care program and attend Kinship Care program meetings.

Currently, tribes manage services for Indian children in out-of-home care through written agreements, called "161 Agreements," with individual counties. The original intent of the 161 Agreements was to assure county payment for out-of-home care placements ordered through the tribal courts. Some of the agreements have since been expanded to cover support and treatment services to children in care and their families, IV-E eligibility determinations, permanency planning requirements, independent living, and, in some cases, additional agreements related to child protective service investigations and removals. The DCFS monitors the development of the 161 Agreements and at times has arranged for a facilitator to help in negotiating the agreements. The 161 Agreements created a mechanism resulting in improved communication and negotiations between county departments and tribes.

At the present time, most of the 11 tribes in Wisconsin have established tribal courts to deal with child welfare issues. Tribes with no tribal court and, in some cases, tribes with courts will refer cases to the county child welfare agency. In most cases, when an allegation of abuse or neglect of an Indian child comes into a county agency, the county agency conducts the investigation in conjunction with child welfare staff of the tribe.

Consultation with Tribes

Communication with the tribes is done through tribal chairpersons, as the official contact persons for the tribes, and tribal human service program coordinators. Chairpersons and program coordinators receive DCFS letters, numbered memos, and other program instructions. The primary forum for having group conversations with tribal officials is through the annual DHFS conference addressing human service issues with tribes. Meetings with tribal officials on child welfare issues are coordinated with the conference. Other group meetings with tribal officials are scheduled as needed to discuss specific issues. For issues involving individual tribes, DCFS communication with the tribe involved through the tribal chairperson or other tribal officials. Individual meetings with tribes are held as needed with Department Tribal Affairs or Area Administration staff representing DCFS or with DCFS directly.

Bimonthly staff meetings are held between DCFS and the Tribal Affairs Unit staff with tribal child welfare staff to discuss Indian child welfare issues. These staff meetings are used to identify Indian child welfare issues that require discussion at higher levels with tribal officials and Department managers. Recent staff meetings have focused on ICWA training and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The Oneida Tribe facilitated a tribal stakeholder interview for the CFSR in August 2003 and an Oneida child welfare supervisor participated as a CFSR case reviewer.

Tribes are currently represented on the Child Welfare Executive Steering Committee (ESC) by a representative of the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council. Discussions are underway to identify ways to improve tribal representation on the ESC and other DCFS standing committees and ad hoc workgroups. Improving the communication and coordination with tribes will be a major theme for Wisconsin's CFSR program improvement plan.

Indian Child Welfare Act

In Wisconsin, tribes which have a court system utilized to place children into out-of-home care enter into "161 Agreements" with the home county. In essence, these agreements give full faith and credit to the tribe in terms of licensing foster homes and placing children in out-of-home care. The county is then financially responsible for the cost of the placements pursuant to the Agreement. In some cases, the agreement specifies a maximum amount of such funding; in other cases, the amount is open-ended. The agreements also describe in detail which agency (the county or the tribe) is responsible for determining Title IV-E eligibility, for implementing permanency planning requirements, etc.

Over the years, there have been issues that have arisen in the negotiation of these agreements. This is due in part to the fact that the state has issued a policy defining what information must be contained in the agreement and suggests guidelines for what information might be contained in the agreement, but has not developed any sort of materials on the process of negotiating the agreements.

The DCFS will continue efforts to enhance 161 Agreements to assure that all such agreements address any additional issues that can improve services for Indian children and their families. Enhancements will be pursued in 2004 and later revisions will be made, as necessary, after initiatives that influence the content of the agreements are completed, including the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*, the administrative rule on permanency planning and reasonable efforts, and statutory changes made to comply with the ASFA.

There have been questions about the role and responsibility of tribes, county Child Protective Services agencies, and the state in child welfare cases that are not covered under the Indian Child Welfare Act. The DCFS has requested technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment this year to study the issue and

develop guidelines for how the state, county CPS agencies, and tribes can best work together to meet the needs of Indian children.

Training on the ICWA is provided by the Child Welfare Training Partnerships in Wisconsin. A detailed ICWA training is offered in addition to the core course on legal issues, which includes information on the ICWA. The DCFS provides technical assistance to the county child welfare agencies when questions on compliance with ICWA arise.

DCFS intends to codify all of the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act into Chapters 48 (the Children's Code) and 938 (the Juvenile Justice Code) to facilitate an understanding of ICWA requirements on the parts of county and state caseworkers, supervisors, judges, District Attorneys and Corporation Counsel, and other professionals involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

While awaiting this codification, DCFS will enhance our efforts to provide training on ICWA for all affected individuals. DCFS will also issue a numbered memo on related ICWA issues including notification requirements, placement preferences, and identification of children as Indian children. This will facilitate our attempts to remedy problems identified by Indian child welfare staff in the processes related to the Child and Family Services Review, the Child and Family Services Plan, and the tribal priorities document.

The Bureau of Programs and Policies will also be hiring a staff person to serve as Indian Child Welfare Consultant to focus on programs and issues affecting both tribes and Indian families served by local child welfare agencies.

V. ADDITIONAL REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN

This section of the plan addresses additional information specifically required for state plans as specified in the federal plan instructions in Memo ACYF-CB-PI-04-01. Some of the required items are addressed under other sections of the plan, such as the CAPTA and Adoption Program sections.

Diligent Recruitment

In September 1999, Wisconsin developed a recruitment campaign that was kicked off with the support of the Governor. This was a one-time campaign that included radio, television, and movie trailer ads. The effort covered one year and was very successful. Even today people talk about the ads that they either loved or hated, but they are remembered. Unfortunately, outside the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), there were extremely limited funds available to sustain or build on the recruitment effort. We did develop a recruitment video that counties could use with their prospective foster families. This video has received limited use. In BMCW, there has been a more significant amount of recruitment funds made available. While recent efforts have received some response from potential foster/adoptive families, the ads have had limited success.

Wisconsin has found word-of-mouth to be one of our greatest recruitment tools. DCFS has also found that a large percentage of special needs adoptions, more than 85% in the state and more than 95% in BMCW, are the result of foster home conversions. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is that our adoption assistance (AA) reimbursement rates tend to be higher than what the family received for fostering the child. Wisconsin reimburses through AA up to \$2,000 per month. This has put stress on our counties through the depletion of their resources. As a result, in Wisconsin, our future recruitment efforts will be for foster/adoptive parents with more emphasis on training and preparation of these resources for the challenges they will encounter.

Transfers of Children to Juvenile Justice

The CAPTA Amendments of 2003 require states, to the extent possible, to collect information on children in the custody of child welfare agencies who are transferred to the custody of juvenile justice agencies. No information is included in this progress report. Efforts to prepare for the future collection of data are described later Section VIII of the plan.

Child Welfare Demonstration Projects

Wisconsin does not have any child welfare waiver demonstration projects currently in operation. The DCFS submitted a federal IV-E waiver request for a Subsidized Guardianship program in January 2004 that is pending federal approval. More information is provided about the Guardianship waiver in Section VIII of the plan.

VI. CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT PLAN

In August 2003, the Wisconsin child protective services program was evaluated by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and was the 43rd state to undergo this Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). As occurred in every state, the ACF reviewed 50 cases in three counties which were intended to represent performance across the state, held focus groups, and evaluated data and a state self-assessment. Like every other state in the nation, Wisconsin was found in substantial non-conformance with many of the outcomes in the CFSR.

The following outcome areas and systemic factors must be addressed in the PEP:

- Safety Outcome 1 - Protection of children from abuse and neglect
- Safety Outcome 2 - Maintain children safely in their homes where appropriate
- Permanency Outcome 1 - Permanence and stability of living situations
- Permanency Outcome 2 - Preserving continuity of family relationships
- Well-Being Outcome 2 - Educational services to children
- Well-Being Outcome 3 - Physical and mental health services
- Case Review System - Written case plans and regular permanency hearings
- Quality Assurance - State program standards and quality assurance activities
- Staff and Provider Training - Training for local agency staff and foster parents
- Service Array - Services available to children and families

The state received its CFSR results in January 2004, and was given 90 days to produce a statewide program improvement plan in response. The Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) was submitted to ACF in April 2004 and is currently under federal review. Once approved, Wisconsin will implement the PEP over a two-year period.

The PEP was created through a collaborative process that occurred over a period of seven months, and was guided by an internal planning team consisting of the DCFS Administrator, Bureau and Office Directors, and a Facilitator/Coordinator. The internal planning team recruited a PEP Core Team of more than sixty (60) child welfare experts, including representatives of counties, tribes, advocates, and other stakeholders, to develop improvement strategies for the PEP.

The Core Team began by identifying the underlying conditions in families, communities, child welfare agencies, and state government that impact Wisconsin's child welfare operations and performance. The Core Team identified overarching strategies for program improvement and developed and prioritized specific action steps to improve CFSR outcomes within the two-year timeframe. The work of the PEP Team was instrumental in reaching agreement on the overarching strategies that form the basis for the state objectives for 2005-2009 described in Section III of this plan.

The Core Team selected the final PEP action steps by applying three strategic criteria. Action steps must be: 1) perceived by the Core Team as effective in addressing the very specific findings of the CFSR; 2) substantially achievable within two years; and 3) practicable within the constraints of the current fiscal environment and the authority of

child welfare agencies. These action steps are included in the 2005-2009 plan.

The full PEP, including the "PEP matrix," which identifies the specific action steps, is available at: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr/PEP.htm>

Status of PEP Implementation

The Wisconsin PEP is currently under review by ACF and updates to the plan will be necessary to provide clarification and establish performance improvement targets for the PEP period. It is anticipated that the PEP period will be calendar years 2005 and 2006, assuming that the PEP is approved by the end of 2004.

The PEP Matrix identifies specific timeframes for implementation of action steps. The PEP Matrix is based on 10 quarters, with the first two quarters being the period from July to December 2004. During this period, regardless of when the PEP is finalized with ACF, DCFS will begin implementation of the action steps. The specific timeframes for completion of action steps will depend upon final PEP approval.

Once the PEP is approved, DCFS must submit quarterly reports showing progress in implementing the action steps and the impact of implementation on program outcomes. It is anticipated that the first quarterly report will be submitted in Spring 2005 based on the January - March 2005 quarter being the first quarter of the official PEP period.

The Annual Services and Progress Report portion of the Child and Family Services Plan will be used to provide annual updates on PEP implementation and program outcomes.

National Performance Standards

The CFSR process includes analyses of statewide data as reported for NCANDS and AFCARS purposes on six safety and permanency measures. For the Wisconsin CFSR review, the state was determined to be in non-conformance with five of the six measures. The PEP action steps, while targeted at specific aspects of performance, are also designed to improve statewide performance on the national standards. The final approved PEP will include specific improvement targets for the five measures.

The following table shows current state performance on the national performance standards. For some items, alternative data sources must be used to determine the state performance for 2002 and 2003. DCFS is currently working with the Administration for Children and Families Chicago Regional Office and the Children's Bureau to obtain approval for the methodology to determine the 2002 and 2003 performance.

Wisconsin Achievement of National Performance Standards

Performance Standards (Percent)	National Standard)	WI Data 2001	WI Data 2002	WI Data 2003
Safety Outcome 1 – Recurrence of Maltreatment Of all children who were victims of substantiated maltreatment report in the first 6 months of the year, what percent were victims of another substantiated report within a 6-month period?	6.1 or less	6.9 *	NA	NA
Safety Outcome 1 – Maltreatment While in Care Of all children in out-of-home care in first 9 months of the year, what percent experienced maltreatment by foster parents or facility staff members?	0.57 or less	0.61 *	0.26 *	NA
Permanency Outcome 1 – Re-entry to Care Of all children who entered out-of-home care during the year, what percent re-entered care within 12 months of a prior out-of-home care episode?	8.6 or less	25.5	22.2	21.5
Permanency Outcome 1 – Timely Reunification Of all children reunified from out-of-home care during the year, what percent were reunified within 12 months of entry into out-of-home care?	76.2 or more	71.0	66.5	65.2
Permanency Outcome 1 – Timely Adoption Of all children adopted from out-of-home care during the year, what percent were adopted within 24 months of their entry into out-of-home care?	32.0 or more	21.2 *	NA	NA
Permanency Outcome 1 – Placement Stability Of all children in out-of-home care during the year for less than 12 months, what percent experienced no more than 2 placement settings?	86.7 or more	93.8	92.3	92.6

Sources: State performance is computed from federal AFCARS or NCANDS data except where noted.
 * Estimate based on state data approved as alternate source of data for the performance standard.

VII. CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM SYSTEMIC FACTORS

This section of the Child and Family Services Plan addresses the seven systemic factors that are examined in the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) of state child welfare programs. The systemic factors relate to the infrastructure of the child welfare service system that supports the delivery of effective services to children and families. This section of the plan also covers research and evaluation activities.

The results of the 2003 Wisconsin CFSR identified information system capacity, responsiveness to the community, and foster and adoptive parent recruitment as strengths. The results identified case review system, quality assurance, training, and service array as areas needing improvements. Specific action steps to address the CFSR results are included in the initial draft of the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) submitted for federal review on April 14, 2004.

A. Information System Capacity

Wisconsin is completing implementation of a comprehensive Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, called WiSACWIS, which will be used by all local agencies, the BMCW, and the state Adoption Program. The WiSACWIS project began development in March 1999 with a donor SACWIS system transferred from New Mexico. The DHFS has contracted with American Management Systems, Inc. (AMS) to fully implement the WiSACWIS and roll the system out to all counties statewide.

WiSACWIS was implemented in phases and the last group of counties is implementing the system on June 28, 2004, at which point WiSACWIS will be fully operational statewide (with the exception of tribes).

- **Phase 1** involved implementation of the system in 2000 by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare in Milwaukee (BMCW) and by the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). Phase 1 was completed in December 2000.
- **Phase 2** involved statewide expansion and began in 2001. Counties implemented the system starting in October 2001 generally in groups of 10 to 12 counties every four months for the statewide rollout. The last group of 14 counties implements the system in June 2004.
- **Phase 3** started in 2002 and involves converting WiSACWIS from a traditional client server-based application to Internet Web technology to reduce operational support and maintenance costs. The conversion to "eWiSACWIS" was completed in December 2003. Counties implementing the system in 2004 are implementing the new Internet version.

With the statewide implementation of the system at hand, Wisconsin is beginning the process to obtain federal certification of the WiSACWIS system as meeting all SACWIS requirements. The initial federal certification review will take place in September 2004. Based on the experience of other states, obtaining final federal certification will likely be a multi-year process.

WiSACWIS is designed to provide statewide data on child abuse and neglect investigations for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and statewide data on children in the out-of-home care and adoption programs for Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) reporting purposes. During the transition period, as counties have come up on WiSACWIS, state data have come from the combination of WiSACWIS and legacy systems.

The legacy systems include the Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) data system for child abuse and neglect reports and the Human Services Reporting System (HSRS) for information on children in foster care, payments to foster care providers, and adoptions, and the Kinship Care Data Tracking System for information on children receiving Kinship care payments.

For NCANDS reporting, the CAN system is currently used to submit summary state data for the NCANDS Summary Data Component (SDC) format. WiSACWIS data are loaded into the CAN system to produce the SDC report. Development is currently underway in WiSACWIS to create the Child File for submitting case-specific data along with the Agency file to provide additional NCANDS information. The CAN system will be used to provide the SDC report for FFY 2004 while the new Child and Agency Files are being tested. Wisconsin will submit the Child and Agency files instead of the SDC summary report beginning in FFY 2005

The HSRS system has historically been used to submit state foster care and adoption data to the federal AFCARS data system. The HSRS Child Substitute Care (CSC) module is used to collect out-of-home care information and the HSRS Adoption module is used for reporting finalized adoptions. The WiSACWIS foster care file was developed in 2003 and is used for counties reporting out-of-home care cases in WiSACWIS. During the transition period, WiSACWIS and HSRS out-of-home information have been integrated into a single "blended" AFCARS foster care file. As counties have implemented WiSACWIS, the WiSACWIS share of the blended AFCARS foster file has grown as use of the HSRS CSC module is phased out. With the last group of counties implementing WiSACWIS in June 2004, the AFCARS FFY 2004 "B" file for the period ending September 30, 2004 will be the first AFCARS foster care file with 100% WiSACWIS data. Wisconsin will begin encrypting AFCARS foster care files from that point forward, which will improve federal capacity to match AFCARS files from different time periods.

For adoption AFCARS reporting, Wisconsin is planning the development of the WiSACWIS adoption file. Development will begin in 2004 with the goal of using WiSACWIS data for adoption AFCARS reporting beginning in FFY 2005. Until that point, adoption AFCARS data will continue to be generated from the HSRS adoption module. SNAP program staff collect information for the HSRS adoption reporting based on adoption cases managed in WiSACWIS.

Under the Chafee Act, states are required to collect outcome information for youth who age out of the out-of-home care system. Wisconsin is waiting on federal direction on the specific outcome measures before building data collection mechanisms. It is anticipated that the Chafee outcome data collection will be implemented through enhancements to the WiSACWIS system.

B. Research and Evaluation

The DCFS publishes several types of child welfare statistical information. The DCFS publishes an annual report on child abuse and neglect (CAN) statistics for the state, including the number and type of maltreatment reports and the disposition of those reports. The DCFS produces periodic out-of-home care (OOHC) reports using out-of-home care information. The last OOHC report analyzing data through 1999 was published in October 2001. Additional OOHC reports will be produced once out-of-home care data for all counties can be obtained from WiSACWIS.

The BMCW has a Program Evaluation and Management (PEM) unit that produces monthly data reports on child welfare services in Milwaukee. These monthly data reports are shared widely

within the Milwaukee community. On a semi-annual basis, a comprehensive report on BMCW achievement of lawsuit settlement performance objectives is produced and shared with the Milwaukee community.

Within DCFS, the Office of Policy Evaluation and Planning leads efforts to develop data sources and analyze program outcomes to improve the quality of child welfare services in the state. The Office develops program outcome reports for counties using CAN, HSRS, WiSACWIS, and other data patterned after the federal child welfare outcomes report. Additional reports for county use will be produced as part of the quality assurance initiative in the Wisconsin PEP.

The DCFS is currently contracting with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University of Chicago-Chapin Hall to conduct a third party evaluation of child welfare services provided by the BMCW in Milwaukee County. The evaluation includes both in-home and out-of-home care services. The project has produced reports on in-home safety services in 2003 and recent entries to out-of-home care in 2004. A third report on another group of children who have been in out-of-home care for an extended period is currently underway. The final evaluation report will be completed in 2005.

DCFS currently contracts with the University of Chicago-Chapin Hall to participate in a 3-state study with Illinois and Iowa to evaluate Independent Living outcomes for youth who aged out of out-of-home care. Outcome areas that will be examined include employment, education, housing, and various lifestyle issues (parenting, substance abuse, victimization, etc.). The study will also compile information regarding services and supports the youths received. Cases were selected for the evaluation starting in April 2002 and the first wave of interviews with youth were completed in 2003. An interim report on the first wave of interviews has been completed. The second wave of interviews with the sampled youth is being conducted in 2004. The final wave of interviews will be conducted prior to the youth turning 21. Wisconsin anticipates using the study results to meet expected federal Chafee program reporting requirements on a sample basis until more complete data collection mechanisms can be developed.

C. Judicial and Administrative Panel Review System

Wisconsin has a comprehensive judicial and administrative panel review system in place to review the permanence goals and case and permanency plans for children in out-of-home care and to ensure compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). Key aspects of child welfare case planning and review include the following factors:

- Development and implementation of service and progress evaluation plans with families and key collateral contacts with the family system; and,
- Use of the case and permanency plans and results of subsequent progress evaluations as a bases for conducting permanency plan reviews, assessing ASFA considerations and requirements, and modifying the permanence goal, as necessary, including the development of a concurrent permanence goal.

Practice responsibilities and relevant parties associated with the above factors are governed by a variety of policy directives, including state statutes, administrative rules, program policies, standards, guidelines, and operating procedures. Current state statutes governing child welfare intervention address permanency plan review requirements, timeframes, plan content, and notice procedures, including notice to out-of-home care providers, and are consistent with expectations prescribed under ASFA.

The issuance of the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* in May 2002 provides a uniform system to assure that all county child welfare caseworkers conduct timely family assessments, develop case plans, and conduct case reviews for all children and families who enter the system. Coupled with the previously issued *CPS Investigation Standards*, the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* are designed to cover the life of a case from the time that a child abuse or neglect report is received through the closing of the ongoing services case.

The DCFS has implemented several approaches to informing, clarifying, and monitoring permanency planning review requirements and assessing ongoing ASFA compliance. These approaches include development or modification and implementation of standards and guidelines for practice and operating procedures, provision of training and technical assistance, and ongoing monitoring and program improvement responsibilities.

To further clarify ASFA requirements previously codified into Wisconsin statutes, DCFS proposed legislative changes in the 2003-04 legislative session. Unfortunately, the legislative session ended before the changes could be enacted. DCFS will again introduce those changes when the Legislature returns in January of 2005. Several standard court forms were revised in September 2002 to reflect these statutory changes and DCFS is continuing to fine-tune those forms as modifications are made to policies and statutes.

Modification of Administrative Rules, Standards, Policies, and Operating Procedures

The ability to comply with ASFA requirements not only requires tracking the length of a child's placement in out-of-home care, but also implementing practice standards and guidelines, policies, and procedures, and program coordination which support effective child welfare intervention. Such efforts focus on successfully engaging the child and his or her family,

involving them in the development of a unique and responsive case plan, and evaluating progress in a thorough and regular manner, involving the family, providers, and key collateral contacts in this process.

Finally, DCFS continues to work with representatives of the Director of State Courts Office, the Milwaukee County Children's Court, and other key legal stakeholders in supporting continued cross-system coordination in the state's permanency planning review responsibilities and compliance with the ASFA. Efforts have focused on the identification and development of strategies to address the availability of resources within and philosophical differences among members of Wisconsin's county judiciary regarding the implementation of the ASFA requirements.

D. Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance Staffing

Several program units throughout the DCFS and the DHFS carry out quality assurance efforts directed at the state's child welfare program in both the BMCW and in county agencies across the state. These program units include the following:

- *Department Area Administration Regional Staff* – These staff review local child welfare programs, including monitoring program performance, conducting on-site reviews, and responding to client and public complaints about local program services.
- *BMCW Program Evaluation Managers (PEMs)* – These staff review the program performance of contracted service providers in the BMCW child welfare program, including safety, case management, adoption, and licensing services. The staff monitor agency performance and conduct regular on-site reviews.
- *BPP Adoption Quality Assurance Specialists* – These staff review the program performance of contracted service providers in the Special Needs Adoption Program. The BPP is in the process of hiring staff to monitor agency performance and conduct on-site reviews.
- *BPP Child Welfare Policy Section* - These policy staff provide policy expertise for program monitoring and agency review activities.
- *DCFS Office of Policy Evaluation and Planning* - The office coordinates quality assurance activities with the different units, including implementing quality assurance strategies and using program outcome data for program monitoring and contract management purposes.
- *OSF Program Evaluation and Audit Section* – These staff perform in-depth program and fiscal audits of agencies receiving funds from the Department. DCFS uses this unit as needed to ensure accountability of agencies for child welfare funds.

In response to the August 2003 CFSR, the DCFS produced a program enhancement plan that includes the design and implementation of a comprehensive statewide Quality Assurance System. The purpose of the Quality Assurance System is to identify strengths and problem areas and then provide needed technical assistance and support to enhance Wisconsin's child welfare program.

An RFP is under development to contract for five Quality Service Review Specialists (QSR) that will be responsible for leading on-site case, program, and agency reviews as part of the Department's systemic child welfare quality assurance plan. The reviews will be coordinated with Area Administration teams and conducted in partnership with county and tribal agencies. The QSR Specialists will also participate in the development of strategies and identification of support services that will assist the agency in improving performance.

A state-employed Quality Services Review Manager will be hired in 2004 to provide oversight, analysis, and program planning for the provision of statewide quality child welfare services and the child welfare quality assurance plan. This position will supervise and coordinate the activities of the five QSR specialists. A paraprofessional Quality Service Review Coordinator will also be hired to coordinate county agency review logistics, manage quality enhancement data from case reviews, and assist in the production of review reports for county agencies.

Adoption Program Quality Assurance

The quality assurance component of the Adoption Program was implemented in October of 2001 with the hiring of four (4) adoption QA staff for the purpose of supporting strategies to improve special needs adoption services and track outcomes. The first six months was spent on training and establishing the criteria for doing QA focused on quality improvement. In 2002, the QA staff began doing the annual satisfaction survey and developing a quality assurance tool for monitoring adoption cases assigned to contract partner agencies to determine agency eligibility for a performance payment and to measure outcomes. The QA tool, along with personal and telephone interviews and surveys, is used for on-site reviews of cases.

The adoption QA staff also review cases for compliance with the Adoption Standards of Practice. Examples of activities that are analyzed include: methods of handling complaints by foster and adoptive parents; how case plans are developed to meet the permanence needs of the child; preparation of the child for adoption to successfully transition to adopted status; and training of prospective adoptive parents regarding issues with special needs children in order to ensure that parents are knowledgeable of issues affecting adoptive children, thereby reducing the likelihood of a failed adoption.

The QA staff do regular reports on the private agencies, develop the annual adoption report required by statute, provide quality oversight of the Adoption Program, provide or arrange for training, and follow up on WiSACWIS data entry issues claiming clean-up, develop a monthly newsletter for all adoption staff to ensure continuity of adoption service throughout the state, and other tasks as assigned. In our next biennial budget, DCFS will make these positions permanent within the Adoption Program.

Ongoing Monitoring and Program Improvement

The DCFS continues to implement ongoing efforts to assess the quality of child welfare services, to identify what is needed to support service quality, and to develop strategies to respond to those needs, including the requirements associated with permanency planning reviews and compliance with the ASFA.

As part of its ongoing quality assurance efforts, the DCFS has increased its efforts to support and utilize the information available from its data sources and developed new data collection tools to better understand the status of child welfare service delivery across the state. As a result of data collection, analysis, and reporting for the BMCW, DCFS has achieved increased capacity to use data for program monitoring. This capacity is increasing through the statewide implementation of the WiSACWIS. County agencies are provided with reports on program activity and will be provided with additional reports once all counties have converted to WiSACWIS.

E. Training and Technical Assistance

Staff Training

Training is provided to local agency staff primarily through Training Partnerships formed by county and tribal agencies with several campuses of the University of Wisconsin system. The state is divided into four training regions: the Northeastern Wisconsin (NEW) Partnership with the UW-Green Bay; the Western Partnership with UW-River Falls; the Southern Partnership with the UW-Madison; and the Milwaukee Partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. DCFS works with the Training Partnerships to provide a statewide system of training for child welfare workers on the foundations of practice and advanced skilled training on specialized topics. All counties, BMCW, SNAP, and most tribes are members of the Training Partnerships.

Training activities are coordinated using a State Training Council that reviews training activities and provides direction to the Training Partnerships. The Training Partnerships have local steering committees with representation from county and tribal child welfare agencies. The Training Partnerships work closely with child welfare managers to encourage counties to have more staff complete the core training. In 2002, the Training Council developed a comprehensive strategic plan for the training system that is being used to guide further development of the Training Partnership system.

The Training Partnerships are involved in supporting counties to provide training to foster parents and prospective adoptive parents using a state-approved competency based curriculum. Foster and adoptive parent training is discussed in detail under the foster and adoptive parent recruitment section of the plan.

Training Curriculum

The Wisconsin training curriculum for child welfare staff is a competency-based approach designed to reinforce the basic principles of good case practice and to develop specialized knowledge and skills. A foundation of "Core" courses is offered statewide and all caseworkers are expected to complete the Core. Regular offerings of "specialized" training on advanced practice skills and "related" training on topics important to casework provide opportunities for ongoing training. DCFS will be working with the Training Partnerships, counties, and tribes to develop a comprehensive pre-service training curriculum.

DCFS and the Training Partnerships continue to update the standard training curricula to better educate child welfare staff regarding state and federal program requirements and child welfare practice to instill the competencies needed by staff to support child safety, permanence, and well being. Specialized training on new program initiatives is provided through the Training Partnerships to the extent possible and all training activities are coordinated with the Training Partnerships. In Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Training Partnership also operates the staff development program under contract, providing training to BMCW staff on program requirements and BMCW operating procedures.

Foster Care Provider Training

The training program for foster and adoptive parents is described under Section IV of the plan on page 22. DCFS is committed to the expansion of pre-service and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents. The new foster care resource center will provide statewide support for training efforts.

DCFS contracts with the University of Milwaukee Youth Work Learning Center to provide training to staff caring for children in group homes and residential care centers. For treatment foster care, DCFS administrative rule requires that the treatment foster care agencies provide training to treatment foster parents.

Other Training and Technical Assistance

DCFS supports academic degree programs using Title IV-E funds on a pass-through basis. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, and UW-Green Bay (jointly with UW-Oshkosh) operate Masters of Social Work (MSW) student stipend programs. UW-Green Bay also has a Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW) stipend program.

Beginning in 2003, DCFS, through the Training Council, has been working with tribes to develop a "Tribal Training Partnership" to provide training and technical assistance to tribal child welfare staff to address specific needs related to tribal child welfare programs. DCFS is committed to supporting the development of the Tribal Training Partnership and will provide funding for a tribal training manager position.

The Division conducts other types of technical assistance and program education activities, including hosting an annual child welfare conference for local agency administrators and managers and periodic program roundtable meetings on child welfare program topics. Through the regional offices, the Department provides ongoing technical assistance to counties and tribes regarding child welfare program knowledge, skills, and program requirements.

IV-E Funding for Training

DCFS provides financial support to the Training Partnerships primarily by passing through Title IV-E training funds based on match generated by the universities and the member agencies. The member county and tribal agencies provide cash contributions to the Training Partnerships. DCFS works with the universities to define procedures for counting member agency expenses as match. DCFS has also established detailed fiscal reporting to ensure documentation of match expenses.

Specific training projects are also funded by DCFS using other federal funding sources such as Title IV-B and CAPTA. The Training Partnerships receive CAPTA funds for training related to child protective service assessments and the Training Partnerships also use university resources and member agency contributions to support training that is not IV-E reimbursable.

DCFS has issued a comprehensive IV-E training fiscal guide based on federal law, regulations, and audit findings to provide guidance to all grantees receiving IV-E funds. The fiscal guide

describes in detail the types of expenses eligible for IV-E reimbursement at the enhanced training rate and the obligations of universities receiving IV-E funds.

Enhancing Training

In the Wisconsin CFSR results, initial staff training, ongoing staff training, and foster/adoptive parent training were cited as areas needing improvement. In the Wisconsin PEP, DCFS has committed to establishing statewide requirements for initial and ongoing staff training, and ensuring that all foster/adoptive parents complete the existing competency based pre-service training and receive ongoing training.

Additional funds will be provided to the Training Partnerships to establish a statewide program of initial or pre-service training for child welfare staff and to expand ongoing training to ensure that all staff receive foundation or Core training and ongoing training.

DCFS will also establish a WiSACWIS training program that will provide ongoing systems training to county, BMCW, and, potentially, tribal users of the system. The WiSACWIS training will be coordinated with the practice and specialized training sessions delivered by the Training Partnerships. In addition, DCFS is establishing a statewide foster care resource center that will provide statewide coordination of foster and adoptive parent training.

F. Service Array

The availability, applicability, and accessibility of key service interventions are critical to helping families maintain or achieve safe home environments and to assure timely permanence for children who require temporary or permanent placement outside of their homes. As part of Wisconsin's child welfare program, county agencies, tribes, and the BMCW assure the availability of services through a variety of sources.

On behalf of the BMCW, the vendor agencies provide in-home safety services to families and ongoing case management services to families with children placed in out-of-home care. The vendor agencies create specialized service networks with community service providers, through either subcontract, memoranda of understanding, or information and referral. These service networks include specific resources designed to meet the individualized needs of families based on the families' current case plan or progress evaluation. The BMCW has specified a standard list of services that must be available to all families based on their service needs.

Similarly, in the balance of the state, county and tribal agencies receive funds from the Department to support the delivery of prevention, early intervention, and ongoing assistance needed to assure child safety and permanence. Funds directed toward these services are provided through the Community Aids and Youth Aids programs, PSSF program, IV-E Incentive Funds program, and other state and local funding mechanisms. These services are available statewide, although counties have developed individualized service strategies based on the needs of their population and the availability of service providers. The DCFS gives counties and tribes considerable flexibility with local service strategies.

The DCFS uses a program planning process that requires local agencies to solicit community and program participant input into establishing service priorities and service strategies. Through

local PSSF program planning committees or other coordination mechanisms, local agencies have established collaborative planning structures to obtain input into local program planning.

In conjunction with the Division of Disability and Elder Services, the DCFS has developed the Coordinated Services Team Initiative. Based on fundamental core values and a strength-based approach to service provision, child welfare, substance abuse, and mental health agencies will work together across systems utilizing a single coordinated case plan in an effort to provide comprehensive services and supports to children and families. This initiative is aimed at systems change; therefore, it is a time-limited infusion of resources designed to assist counties in changing their service delivery systems. The two Divisions will provide technical assistance and funding to counties in an effort to enhance collaboration, advocacy, and case planning with families involved in multiple systems.

The DCFS issued the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* in May 2002 and is developing Out-of-Home Care Placement Standards and Ch. HFS 44 to provide direction to local agencies in the development of service plans and performing ongoing case management. These standards and guidelines require that service needs be identified in case plans and that recommended services meet the unique needs of the particular family involved.

G. Agency Responsiveness to Community

The DCFS engages in ongoing consultation with local agencies, tribes, and key representatives of agencies or service systems that interface with the child welfare system. Ongoing communication, coordination, and collaboration among the state child welfare program, its funding sources, and its key stakeholders (e.g., foster and adoptive parents, tribes, court systems, service providers, and consumers) are critical to protecting the safety of children, achieving permanency, and promoting the well-being of families. The DCFS continues to work with key stakeholder groups to improve communication and coordination. The input of stakeholders is actively sought by the DCFS and the input is used in the DCFS strategic planning process.

The DCFS regularly works with groups representing key constituencies in the child welfare system to identify and resolve issues. These groups include, but are not limited to, the Wisconsin Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, the Wisconsin County Human Services Association, the 11 Indian Tribes in Wisconsin, the Office of the Director of State Courts, elected officials at the state and local levels, and other associations.

The DCFS staff regularly meet with local agencies and service providers to discuss child welfare issues and identify ways to improve services and state-level support of the service delivery system. State staff participate in regional meetings of local child welfare and juvenile justice program managers.

In Milwaukee, a Partnership Council consisting of representatives from state and local government, the courts, service providers, and other key stakeholders meets regularly to discuss Milwaukee child welfare program issues. The BMCW provides the Partnership Council with regular reports on program activity in Milwaukee.

A state-level Executive Steering Committee (ESC) comprised of key state-level stakeholders has met on a quarterly basis since May of 2001 to consider the results of the local assessment process

and advise the DCFS on how to improve child welfare program performance. Members of the ESC have analyzed a number of issues affecting the Wisconsin child welfare system. The results of the ESC analysis were used by the DCFS in completing its Statewide Assessment in June 2003 for the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

In addition to the ESC, in September 2003, the established the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) Core Team, which served as the principal architect of the plan to respond to outcomes and performance levels that fell below the threshold for substantial conformance in the CFSR. The team was composed of representatives from counties, tribes, State Court Improvement Project staff, Child Welfare Training Partnerships, University of Wisconsin System, other state agencies, and advocacy groups. The Program Enhancement Plan was created through a collaborative process that occurred over a period of 7 months.

To sustain the child welfare planning partnership with counties, tribes, and other stakeholders through the implementation of the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan, five-year Children and Family Services Plan, and the larger five-year Child Welfare Plan, the PEP Core Team and the ESC will be blended into one body and new members will be added to represent the broader constituencies in child welfare. It is envisioned that this team will be composed of about 60 individuals representing counties, tribes, other state agencies, consumers, advocacy organizations, and other child welfare professionals who will work together to help ensure that the needed actions and strategies to improve the child welfare outcomes are implemented. The Child Welfare Program Enhancement Team will:

- Guide the implementation of the plans.
- Ensure the input of staff, peers, consumers, community leaders, and others in the implementation process.
- Provide expertise and advice on resolution of competing issues and other problems as they arise.
- Strengthen and advance the interdisciplinary response to improving the safety, permanence, and well being of children.

Focus Committees on policy, training, quality assurance, service array, and foster care and adoption will design details of the implementation and will be composed of professionals in child protection, mental health, domestic violence, foster parenting, adoption, health care, law enforcement, the courts, alcohol and drug abuse, and other related fields. They will actively involve consumers and other stakeholders in shaping the policies, procedures, practices, and services that comprise the PEP, CFSP, and the Wisconsin five-year plan. They will make recommendations to the DCFS and will consult with the Implementation Team as issues arise that would be best shaped by a larger discussion.

The DCFS continues to support coordination between local child welfare agencies and local PSSF program planning committees. Collaborative efforts have included joint training, involvement in local assessments, and implementation of a combined, multi-year planning process.

H. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Efforts

The availability and quality of licensed out-of-home care placement providers in Wisconsin is supported by a variety of laws, administrative rules, and policies. Regulatory policies are developed by the Bureau of Programs and Policies (BPP) and the Bureau of Regulation and Licensing (BRL), with the BPP developing standards for licensing foster homes and treatment foster homes and the BRL developing and enforcing standards for other types of child welfare agencies. In addition, the DCFS makes focused efforts associated with recruitment, training, and retention. The regulatory aspects of ensuring the safety of children and the quality of providers are driven by state statute and administrative rules as follows:

- Wisconsin's Children's Code, Chapter 48
 1. Placement Authorization
 2. Criminal Background Check Requirements
 3. Independent Investigations of Maltreatment Allegations Against Licensed Providers
 4. Notice to Foster Parents and Other Physical Custodians of Legal Proceedings

- Administrative Rules for Health and Family Services (HFS)
 1. HFS 12 - Caregiver Background Checks
 2. HFS 37 - Information To Be Provided to Foster Parents
 3. HFS 38 - Treatment Foster Care for Children
 4. HFS 50 - Facilitating the Adoption of Children with Special Needs
 5. HFS 51 - Adoption of Children with Special Needs
 6. HFS 52 - Residential Care Centers for Children and Youth
 7. HFS 54 - Child Placing Agencies
 8. HFS 56 - Foster Home Care for Children
 9. HFS 57 - Group Foster Care for Children
 10. HFS 58 - Eligibility for the Kinship Care and Long-Term Kinship Care Program
 11. HFS 59 - Shelter Care Facilities
 12. HFS 94 - Patient Rights and Resolution of Patient Grievances

The BMCW, state Adoption Program, county and tribal human/social services agencies, and private child welfare agencies work together to ensure the availability of and access to foster and adoptive placement resources. These efforts include cross-jurisdictional access to placement resources. State, local, and private agencies also engage in joint recruitment efforts to match placement resources, both foster and adoptive, to the needs of children entering out-of-home care or who are in need of an adoptive placement.

The DCFS continues to support comprehensive statewide recruitment efforts to attract more individuals to be foster or adoptive parents and has an annual recruitment budget. The DCFS recruitment plan assures that the concepts of foster care and adoption are made more visible within all of the communities in the state. A multi-media approach is used to increase awareness of the need for foster and adoptive parents. The DCFS established a toll-free telephone line for interested individuals to call to request further information. Every call received is referred to the appropriate county child welfare agency for follow-up with the caller.

Special recruitment tools have been developed for use by the state Adoption Program and county foster care coordinators to train, recruit, and retain foster and adoptive families. In Wisconsin,

over 85% of the special needs adoptions are foster home conversions. Because of this high percentage, the DCFS has committed to working with counties to recruit quality foster/adoptive resources. While funds for recruitment are limited, the DCFS has found that more can be accomplished by coordinating and pooling recruitment efforts with counties to best accomplish our mutual needs. The DCFS has been successful, through our private partners in the Adoption Program, to access their private resources to further expand the pool of foster/adoptive resources.

In December 2002, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan devoted their winter newsletter to special needs adoption. This newsletter is sent to over 9,000 recipients, including their adoptive families, foundations, member organizations, and churches throughout Wisconsin. In addition, they include special needs adoption and foster care in all of their informational meetings for adoptive families. This was done at no cost to the State of Wisconsin.

The DCFS is looking at other mechanisms to recruit quality families. Paying families for quality adoptive referrals, targeted recruitment, working with faith-based community organizations, and reaching out to national organizations to help sponsor recruitment efforts is in process.

Foster/adopt families stay involved in the program if they are satisfied; to be satisfied, they must be supported and trained. In CY 2002, the DCFS partnered with the Western Wisconsin UW Training Partnership and counties for implementation of the Partners in Alternative Care Education, or P.A.C.E., pre-service training for foster/adopt families. P.A.C.E. is a variation of the Institute for Human Services training and presents a variety of topics foster parents should know and understand when working with foster children. This training has been very positively received and generated a lot of excitement among the foster/adoptive families. Over 25 counties have applied for state pass-through funding to support pre-service training.

In addition, the DCFS has been working with AdoptUSKids to increase recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families. In response to the upcoming public service advertisements from AdoptUSKids, the DCFS, Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, and counties across the state are planning ways to respond quickly and effectively to inquiries from people who are interested in becoming foster or adoptive parents. In this process, counties and adoption agencies are identifying resource families to function as mentor families and provide prospective foster or adoptive parents with information about their experiences in foster care and adoption.

In April 2004, representatives from foster care and adoption, including foster and adoptive parents, gathered for two days of consultation with Judy and John McKenzie from AdoptUSKids. The purpose of the meeting was to work on a benchmarking initiative to increase recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families in Wisconsin. State level staff and regional groups that included foster and adoptive parents, foster care coordinators, contract partner adoption agencies, and tribal representatives identified areas to target to increase recruitment and response to families in the foster care and adoption systems.

One method the DCFS is proposing to support foster and adoptive families and foster care coordinators is the creation of a Foster Care Resource Center. In mid-May 2004, foster parents, adoptive parents, foster care coordinators, adoption staff, tribal representatives, and state staff gathered to discuss and identify services that would support all members of the foster care and adoption systems. This collaborative process will result in the contracting for a Resource Center

to support the work of local agencies, the efforts of foster and adoptive parents, and the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families across Wisconsin.

VIII. CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN 2005-2009

Overview

The Department will continue to develop and implement program standards for safety, permanence, and well being of children and the overall improvement of the child welfare system. The standards implement provisions under federal law, including the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and the Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and improvement strategies included in the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP).

The following section of the plan describes specific activities planned for Title IV-B, Adoption, CAPTA, Chafee, and Tribal Child Welfare during the period of 2005 - 2009. Activities implemented in the next year will be done with FFY 2005 funds. Proposed budgets for FFY 2005 are attached to the plan.

Title IV-B Subpart I - Child Welfare Services

Community Aids Program

The amount of IV-B Subpart I funds included in the Community Aids Program will remain about the same as previous years. No changes are anticipated in program policy for how Community Aids funds can be used for child welfare services.

Youth Aids Program

The amount of IV-B Subpart I funds included in the Youth Aids program will remain about the same as previous years. No changes are anticipate in program policy for how Youth Aids funds can be used for juvenile justice services.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Programs

DHFS will work with the Wisconsin Association for Homeless and Runaway Services (WAHRS) to develop guidelines to assist programs in developing good working relationships with their individual county and law enforcement agencies, and develop policies regarding issues of confidentiality, mutual delivery of service, and information sharing with their local county human service departments. Runaway programs will continue to develop an array of services to strengthen families and improve their ability to parent and provide a safe environment for their children. These services will include crisis counseling, family mediation, family counseling, and parenting classes. These services will support families that currently are not in contact with child protective services, and strengthen families that may be at-risk of intervention by CPS.

Planned Activities: Over the next 5 years, Runaway Programs will continue to strengthen families, prevent family dissolution, promote self-sufficiency, and assure permanent and stable homes for youth.

- Provide over 2,000 families with counseling annually
- Annually serve over 3,300 youth face-to-face
- Provide temporary shelter for approximately 3,600 youth annually

- Provide crisis counseling to over 15,000 youth annually
- Reunite over 95% of youth served by the Runaway Program will be reunited with their families or placed in a mutually agreed upon living situation.

IV-B Subpart II - Promoting Safe and Stable Families

Local PSSF Program Operations

The DCFS has refined the plan format used by counties to develop their three-year plans. In developing plans, counties will utilize both individual and community outcomes. It is expected that counties will use the results to make important programming decisions. The new format will include federal outcomes used for the CFSR process and data will be provided by the DCFS for each county. Individual programs will be required to identify individual outcomes and counties will submit reports which include those results. The new format will focus on ease of use and the ability to better utilize outcome results to determine efficacy of programs. This new format will be used for counties to write their 2005-2007 PSSF plans.

The Wisconsin federal Subpart II grant award for FFY 2004 was larger than expected due to the discretionary appropriation at the federal level and increased Food Stamp utilization in the state for children, which is used to determine state allocations. For the portion of the additional funds related to Family Support, Preservation, and Reunification, the DCFS will allocate additional funds to counties. The DCFS is using a new allocation formula that provides for greater equity and, in particular, provides much needed additional funds to smaller, rural counties. As part of the local 2005-2007 plans, the DCFS will require counties to tie the use of new PSSF monies to program enhancements identified in the Wisconsin PEP.

Other Program Initiatives

The DCFS will continue to promote and support collaborative efforts such as the Coordinated Service Teams. While supporting efforts that deal with short-term crisis issues for at-risk families, it is vital that chronic, long-term issues impairing efforts to become strong and healthy families are also addressed. In addition, a new pilot program involving the collaboration of BPP, other Divisions within the Department, and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections is being developed to provide case management and wrap-around services in order to safely reunite female offenders with their children. Goals of the program are closely tied to objectives identified in Wisconsin's PEP, and will include service components that address issues important to successful reunification such as: permanency, access to physical and emotional healthcare, AODA resources, on-going family assessment, safety planning, collaboration/advocacy with the child's educational system, etc. All services are being designed for accessibility to both parents and children.

The DCFS will further its fatherhood initiative by working with counties to identify and remove policies and practices that may be barriers to fathers and other non-custodial parents participating in child welfare cases and create services/programs that are father-friendly. In addition, in response to one of the strategies identified in Wisconsin's PEP, PSSF funds will be used to assist in enhancing Wisconsin's efforts to identify, locate, and involve fathers and paternal relatives in an effort to better meet the needs of children in the child welfare system.

The DCFS will continue to work with counties and tribes to strengthen collaborative efforts at the local level to improve and enhance services to children and families. In response to one of the items in Wisconsin's PEP, we will be using some of Wisconsin's PSSF funding to add a Tribal Services Training Coordinator. This will be a state position that will assess the need for training and technical assistance among county and tribal workers in the areas of Indian Tribal Welfare, cultural issues, and federal and state requirements.

The DCFS will work with local PSSF lead agencies to identify the level of current programs and services designed to improve relationship skills/strengthen marriages.

Starting in 2004, PSSF funds will be used for technical assistance to agencies operating Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (POCAN) programs that provide training to paraprofessionals to be "home visitors" and provide parenting training/education of new parents. This is a prevention program intended to reduce child abuse and neglect. A recent evaluation of the POCAN program by the Department has shown it to be effective.

Use of Subpart 2 Funds for PSSF Services

Of the total Subpart 2 funds, 20% is used by the DCFS for state-level adoption promotion and support services activities. A small amount, approximately 5%, is used by the DCFS for state operations, including training and technical assistance to counties and tribes. Slightly more than 5% will be used to fund three statewide programs. The remaining 70% of the Subpart 2 funds are allocated to counties and tribes to fund support, preservation, and reunification programs and for three statewide service enhancement programs. Local agencies are required to apply the federal funding requirements for preservation, support, and reunification services to meet the Subpart 2 spending requirements for those service areas. The PSSF program allocations to counties and tribes are also supplemented with an additional \$300,000 from other funds, including Drug Free Schools funds.

For the adoption promotion and support services portion of the Subpart 2 program, the PSSF funds are directed toward promoting and supporting adoption as a permanency outcome for children. For information about the adoption portion of PSSF funds, please see the adoption section of this plan.

A FFY 2005 budget request for IV-B Subpart 2 funds is included in the plan. The FFY 2005 plan assumes continuation of the FFY 2004 funding level.

State Matching Funds for Subpart 2

The PSSF funds for all categories, except adoption, are allocated to counties on a calendar year basis and tribes on a federal fiscal year basis. Under state policy for the PSSF program, local agencies are required to spend the required minimum amounts for preservation, support, and reunification. Local agencies are also required to use the other services amount on preservation, support, or reunification activities. Wisconsin does not currently operate any projects in the "other" services category. The DCFS uses the adoption amount at the state level as part of the overall financing for adoption program activities.