



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #270

eWiSACWIS System Enhancement, Youth Justice Data Systems, and Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (Children and Families -- Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice)

[LFB 2023-25 Budget Summary: Page 102, #24 (part), Page 115, #15, Page 120 #4]

CURRENT LAW

eWiSACWIS. The statewide automated child welfare information system (eWiSACWIS) is a comprehensive case management system that includes complete, up-to-date case management history on all children and families that receive services under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the federal Social Security Act. Authorized state and county staff use the system to report and retrieve data for the federal adoption and foster care analysis review system (AFCARS) and the national child abuse and neglect data systems (NCANDS). The system complies with federal requirements and guidelines.

Community-Based Youth Justice Services. 2015 Act 55 (the 2015-17 biennial budget act) transferred the youth aids program and related aids programs from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). As part of this transfer, DCF assumed Correction's statutory responsibilities to supervise community-based juvenile delinquency-related services, other than juvenile correctional services. The act transferred 1.0 GPR position from Corrections to administer the youth aids program, but did not transfer additional funding or positions to reflect other state operations costs associated with community-based juvenile justice services.

DISCUSSION POINTS

A. eWiSACWIS Enhancements

1. DCF contracts with Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI), an information technology vendor, to maintain eWiSACWIS. In 2022-23, DCF has budgeted \$5,270,000 (all funds) to fund the

base contract with CGI, including \$2,264,500 GPR, \$1,897,200 FED (Title IV-E), \$527,000 FED (TANF), and \$581,300 PR (fees assessed to counties, supported by children and family aids allocations). Under the current contract, DCF will increase payments for base contract services by 2% to \$5,375,500 (all funds), beginning in 2023-24.

2. In each of the last five years, DCF has increased payments to the eWiSACWIS vendor to fund services not funded in the base contract. In 2022-23, DCF plans to pay CGI an additional \$2,040,800 (all funds), to fund programming services for additional high priority projects, such as interface modernization, browser neutrality (equality of Internet experience for all users, regardless of device, application, or platform), the development of a congregate care provider portal, and systems improvements for kinship care maintenance payments. As in past years, DCF will fund these additional projects in 2022-23 by reallocating available base funding from various DCD appropriations and committing one-time federal funds to these and other eWiSACWIS projects.

3. Table 1 shows the increase in payments to CGI for services not supported in the base contract during each of the past five years.

TABLE 1

eWiSACWIS (All Funds) Base Contract and Additional Project Costs

<u>State Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Base Contract</u>	<u>Planned Spending for Projects Not Part of Base Contract</u>	<u>Total Contracted Budget</u>
2018-19	\$5,104,000	\$613,800	\$5,717,800
2019-20	5,104,000	1,843,100	6,947,100
2020-21	5,104,000	1,126,100	6,230,100
2021-22	5,270,000	1,153,800	6,423,800
2022-23	5,270,000	2,040,800	7,310,800

4. Staff from the DCF Division of Safety and Permanence meet regularly with the Wisconsin County Human Services Association and the Intertribal Child Welfare Committee to discuss the needs of county child welfare workers and develop plans for systems enhancements.

5. Among the current needs identified by county and tribal staff is additional access to the system through the use of mobile devices, the introduction of voice recognition for case notes, and increased automation of data exchanges. In addition, DCF lists the following areas where changes to eWiSACWIS could provide additional support to county and tribal child welfare workers.

- Improve core workflows and make them available to workers on mobile devices to reflect and support current practices.
- Data exchanges with state and county agencies to reduce duplicate entry and improve data quality and interoperability.

- Web portal development to improve the security of information exchanges.
- Secure communication applications for youth and families including chat, video calls, document exchange, and appointment scheduling with their case worker.
- Development or purchase of mobile applications designed to reduce workload and improve document management.
- Concerted effort to reduce documentation burden by removing requirements unless defined in current statutes and standards, and reduce duplicate entry.
- Human-centered design process to engage child welfare workers in system enhancement and innovation.

6. In its 2021 Wisconsin Child Welfare Workload Study, ICF Incorporated identified potential areas that would improve the work experience of child welfare workers in Wisconsin. Child welfare workers indicated that the least preferred aspects of their jobs included lengthy, redundant, and inconsistent processes and procedures, cumbersome and unavailable technology, and unavailable resources. The report noted that many child welfare professionals face obstacles using eWiSACWIS, as they report it as being tedious, redundant, and time-consuming. The time workers spend documenting family notes, writing reports, and entering data into eWiSACWIS reduces time they have to meet with families. Child welfare workers indicated that smart phones, tablets, and laptops could greatly enhance their ability to do work while they are away from their offices, such as waiting in court. However, programming changes to eWiSACWIS are needed to enable child welfare workers to use newer, mobile technologies.

7. AB 43/SB 70 would provide \$2,687,700 [(\$1,505,100 GPR and \$913,800 FED (Title IV-4) and \$268,800 FED (TANF)] in 2023-24 and 2024-25 to fund systems enhancements in the 2023-25 biennium. Of these amounts, \$2,150,100 [(\$1,204,100 GPR, \$731,000 FED (IV-E) and \$215,000 FED (TANF)] in 2024-25 would be provided as one-time funding, and \$537,600 (\$301,100 GPR, \$182,800 FED (IV-E) and \$53,800 FED (TANF)) would be ongoing funded. These amounts reflect the Administration's intention to: (a) increase funding annually by 50% over the 2023-24 base contract amount ($\$5,375,400 \times 0.5 = \$2,687,700$); and (b) allocate the 2024-25 funding increase to provide a 10% increase to support ongoing eWiSACWIS costs (\$537,600) and allocate the rest (\$2,150,100) to support one-time costs of projects to meet new federal standards and improve the system's functionality, including implementing mobile support and improving data exchanges with local agencies. [Alternative A1]

8. If the Committee wanted to reduce funding for this item in the 2023-25 biennium, but still wanted DCF to implement some of systems changes that would assist child welfare workers, it could increase funding annually by 25% over the 2023-24 base ($\$5,375,400 \times 0.25 = \$1,343,900$) and provide all of the funding increase as ongoing funding, rather than provide some of the funding increase as one-time funding. While this option would reduce the amount of funding available for one-time systems changes in the 2023-25 biennium compared to the funding increases in AB 43/SB 70, all of the funding would be retained by DCF as part of the agency's base funding, beginning in the 2025-27 biennium, enabling the agency to fund future increases in the eWiSACWIS base contract

and systems enhancements. Under this option, DCF may decide to continue to reallocate base funding from other DCF appropriations or use one-time federal funds in the 2023-25 to implement systems changes. This option may delay completion of the some of the projects DCF would otherwise complete in the 2023-25 biennium, depending on the Department's ability to continue to reallocate base funding for eWiSACWIS enhancements. [Alternative A2]

9. If no additional funding is provided to fund one-time or ongoing systems enhancements, DCF would need to continue reallocating base funding from other DCF appropriations to implement systems changes to accommodate the needs of local child welfare workers. [Alternative A3]

B. Juvenile Justice Case Management And Reporting System

10. DCF's current statutory responsibilities include training, maintaining data systems, developing service standards, and providing technical assistance to county staff that administer community-based youth justice services. DCF has developed service standards for county staff that include requirements to: (a) document referral and intake information, court decisions and dates, supervision decisions and dates, ongoing review and updates of case records, and the conclusion of youth justice work; (b) maintain service standards, which are the same for child welfare out-of-home care cases. See <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/policy/pdf/yj-standards.pdf>.

11. Since 2019, DCF has trained county staff on the youth assessment screening instrument (YASI), which county staff use to consider a youth's risk to re-offend in the context of the youth's needs and strengths, and to develop case plans. Counties can use YASI to divert youths who are determined to be at low-risk, and less likely to re-offend, from formal court proceedings. Use of the assessment tool by all counties is intended to provide consistency throughout the state, and provide a common measure of the effectiveness of interventions. County use of the YASI has been phased in during the past three years. As of July, 2022, all counties received this training.

12. Although there is some overlap between child welfare and youth justice cases, DCF notes that enhancements are needed to expand and customize eWiSACWIS to support data collection and reporting on community-based youth justice services. In addition, funding is needed to support data collection and reporting on youth justice. For example, DHS proposes to add youth justice data in its data warehouse, develop public dashboards similar to those that are currently available for child protective services, and develop other data reports and dashboards that local agencies can use to monitor and improve their work. For examples of DCF's current, publicly available child welfare reports and dashboards, see <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/parent-portal/info>

13. DCF proposes to create a similar data reporting and case management system for youth justice cases as currently exists for child welfare cases through eWiSACWIS. DCF would likely make these systems changes by purchasing additional programming services with the current eWiSACWIS vendor, CGI.

14. It is unlikely that DCF could absorb costs of expanding a youth justice case management component of eWiSACWIS as part of the funding DCF currently budgets for eWiSACWIS without forgoing other systems changes that support child welfare functions, or reducing systems maintenance services that CGI currently provides.

15. AB 43/SB 70 would provide \$1,176,000 (\$740,900 GPR and \$435,100 FED) annually for DHS to purchase contracted programming services to develop a system for managing youth justice cases. The funding in the bill reflects the costs of 5.0 contracted programmers, each working 1,960 hours at a cost of \$120 per hour. DCF currently claims Title IV-E funds for youth justice systems development work at approximately 37% of project costs. The amounts in the bill would be provided as ongoing, rather than one-time funding.

16. Once created, county and state youth justice workers could benefit from using a statewide case management system, as the information contained in the system could help better inform staff on costs and outcomes when making service decisions. In 2021, counties reported spending approximately \$169.1 million on services they provided to delinquent youths and status offenders, based on information counties reported to the program participation financial reporting system (PPS) administered by the Department of Health Services. Based on the annual amount of funding counties spend on services to youths involved in the justice system, the one-time costs of this item, intended primarily to assist county youth service workers, can be justified.

17. The total number of programming hours needed to create a youth justice case management system, and therefore the cost of the project, is unknown. If the Committee approves funding in the bill to support additional programming hours, the agency would have dedicated, ongoing staff to develop the system, consistent with the Administration's recommendation. Funding would be available in the agency's base funding to continue work on the project in the 2025-27 biennium (if needed), or to increase support for other eWiSACWIS projects to assist county child welfare or youth justice workers. [Alternative B1]

18. Alternatively, the Committee could provide the funding in the bill for these programming services on a one-time basis in the 2023-25 biennium, rather than provide ongoing funding for the project. If the Committee selects this alternative, it could review the Department's progress in completing the project, and project costs, as part of the 2025-27 budget deliberations. [Alternative B2]

19. The Committee could reduce the amount of funding in the bill to support fewer programming hours, equivalent to 3.0 contracted programmers, which would either require DCF to reduce the scope of the youth justice case management system, delay completion of the project, or reduce or eliminate other eWiSACWIS projects that, in the past, have been funded through one-time funding reallocations. Under this option, \$705,600 (\$444,500 GPR and \$261,100 FED) would be provided annually for programming services, and, unlike the proposal under Alternative B2, would continue as part of the agency's base funding. [Alternative B3]

20. A fourth option would require counties to contribute, on a one-time basis, a share of the state's cost of the system enhancements, as these enhancements are primarily intended to assist counties in administering juvenile justice programs. Currently, DCF bills counties, or reduces counties' children and family aids allocations, for the costs of implementing and operating eWiSACWIS. Revenue from county collections is credited to a program revenue appropriation that authorizes DCF to expend all moneys the agency receives from counties to develop and operate eWiSACWIS, with base funding equal to \$581,300.

21. In 2022-23, the county contribution for the base eWiSACWIS vendor contract is approximately 11% of the cost of the base contract (\$5,270,000). The Committee could require counties to fund 11% of the one-time costs of implementing the juvenile justice-related enhancements to eWiSACWIS. Under this option, \$1,176,000 (\$611,500 GPR, \$435,100 FED and \$129,400 PR) would be provided in 2023-24 and 2024-25 on a one-time basis to support the cost of programming hours DCF believes is necessary to complete the project. The current DCF appropriation PR appropriation would be modified to authorize DCF to use county funds to support costs of developing the youth justice case management and reporting system. [Alternative B4]

C. YASI Licensing Fees And Related Costs

22. The statutes require DCF to make available to all counties a juvenile classification system that includes at least the following elements: (a) a risk assessment instrument for determining the probability that a juvenile who has committed an offense will commit another offense; (b) a needs assessment instrument for determining the service needs of a juvenile who has committed an offense; and (c) a services and placement guide for integrating the risk and needs of a juvenile who has committed an offense with other factors to determine an appropriate placement and level of services for the juvenile. As previously indicated, DCF uses YASI software for these services.

23. In 2022-23, DCF will pay Orbis, the firm that created YASI, annual licensing fees (\$175,800). DCF will also purchase coaching toolkits (\$10,000) and consultation services (\$3,600). These costs are currently funded by county fees credited to a DCF program revenue appropriation that authorizes DCF to expend all moneys the agency receives for providing state mailings, special computer services, training programs, printed materials and publications relating to children and family services, for these purposes ("fees for administrative services").

24. AB 43/SB 70 would provide \$195,800 GPR in 2023-24 and \$204,600 GPR in 2024-25 to fund YASI licensing fees and related costs so that counties would no longer pay these costs beginning in 2023-24. Funding would be provided to support inflationary increases in the cost of licensing fees and eWiSACWIS integration and reporting costs. This would enable DCF to comply with the statutory requirement that DCF "make available" these services to counties.

25. The Committee could adopt the funding increases in AB 43/SB 70 so that the state, rather than counties, would assume these costs, beginning in 2023-24 [Alternative B1]. If no additional funding were provided for this purpose, DCF would need to either reallocate base funds to fund ongoing YASI fees and related costs, or require counties to pay these costs. [Alternative C2]. If this option is selected, the current statutes relating to the Department's responsibilities to "make available" the risk assessment instrument could be modified to "make available and may charge counties for costs relating to the risk assessment instrument."

ALTERNATIVES

A. eWiSACWIS -- Child Welfare Enhancements

1. Provide \$2,687,700 [(\$1,505,100 GPR and \$913,800 FED (Title IV-4) and \$268,800 FED (TANF)] in 2023-24 and 2024-25 to fund eWiSACWIS systems enhancements in the 2023-25

biennium. Of the amounts budgeted in 2024-25, \$2,150,100 [(\$1,204,100 GPR, \$731,000 FED (IV-E) and \$215,000 FED (TANF))] in 2024-25 would be provided as one-time funding.

ALT A1	Change to Base
GPR	\$3,010,200
FED	<u>2,365,200</u>
Total	\$5,375,400

2. Provide \$1,343,900 [(\$752,600 GPR and \$456,900 FED (Title IV-4) and \$134,400 FED (TANF)] in 2023-24 and 2024-25 as ongoing funding to support eWisACWIS systems enhancements.

ALT A2	Change to Base
GPR	\$1,505,200
FED	<u>1,182,600</u>
Total	\$2,687,800

3. Take no action.

B. Youth Justice Case Management and Reporting System

1. Provide ongoing funding of \$1,176,000 (\$740,900 GPR and \$435,100 FED) in 2023-24 and 2024-25 to fund programming services provided by 5.0 FTE contracted staff to develop a youth justice case management and reporting system.

ALT B1	Change to Base
GPR	\$1,481,800
FED	<u>870,200</u>
Total	\$2,352,000

2. Provide one-time funding of \$1,176,000 (\$740,900 GPR and \$435,100 FED) in 2023-24 and 2024-25 to fund programming services provided by 5.0 FTE contracted staff to develop a youth justice case management and reporting system.

ALT B2	Change to Base
GPR	\$1,481,800
FED	<u>870,200</u>
Total	\$2,352,000

3. Provide \$705,600 (\$444,500 GPR and \$261,100 FED) annually to fund programming

services provided by 3.0 FTE contracted staff to develop a youth justice case management and reporting system.

ALT B3	Change to Base
GPR	\$889,000
FED	<u>522,200</u>
Total	\$1,411,200

4. Provide one-time funding of \$1,176,000 [\$611,500 GPR, \$435,100 FED and \$129,400 PR (county funds)] in 2023-24 and 2024-25 to develop a youth justice case management and reporting system. Modify the current DCF PR appropriation to authorize DCF to use county funds to support costs of developing the youth justice case management and reporting system in the 2023-25 biennium.

ALT B4	Change to Base
GPR	\$1,223,000
FED	870,200
PR	<u>258,800</u>
Total	\$2,352,000

5. Take no action.

C. YASI Licensing Fees and Related Costs

1. Provide \$195,800 GPR in 2023-24 and \$204,600 GPR in 2024-25 to fund YASI licensing fees and related costs.

ALT C1	Change to Base
GPR	\$400,400

2. Authorize DCF, at its option, to charge counties for costs relating to the youth assessment instrument, and to credit all funds it collects from counties to the PR appropriation that permits DCF to expend all moneys the agency receives from fees for administrative services.

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