



June 30, 2023

Mr. Michael J. Queensland, Chief Clerk
Wisconsin Senate
Room B20 Southeast, State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Mr. Edward A. Blazel, Chief Clerk
Wisconsin Assembly
17 W Main St, Room 401
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Mr. Queensland and Mr. Blazel:

In accordance with Wis. Stat. § 49.175(1) (uk), Wis. Stats., the Department of Children and Families is required to submit to the appropriate standing committees a report on the Grants for Prevention Services on the effectiveness of the grant program by June 30, 2023, and each odd-numbered year thereafter. As specified by the statute, DCF allocates \$500,000 annually for these grants that encourage innovative practices aimed at reducing the contact that families have with the child welfare system and preventing the removal of children from their homes.

Goals of Grants for Prevention Services

DCF developed the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Grants Program (herein referred to as Prevention Grants) to address the need for services for families that would reduce the contact that families have with the child welfare system and prevent the removal of children from their homes. DCF appreciates the Legislature's recognition of the need for prevention services and the wide array of risks leading to child abuse and neglect and the long-term impacts maltreatment can have on a child's life. As such, it is vital for communities to have opportunities to implement innovative prevention programs tailored to their unique community needs. The Prevention Grants are used to support implementation of evidence-based or evidence-informed models for services or implement innovative strategies meeting the community's specific needs. All grantees were required to consider interventions that were culturally responsive, trauma-informed, promote protective factors, and that involved and promoted cross-system integration and collaboration.

Prevention Grants Programs and Services

Six communities are currently being served through Prevention Grants which are awarded to five non-profit organizations and one county human service organization. Contracts began January 1, 2019 and the grant amounts range from \$78,000 - \$85,000 annually. To ensure the continuous flowing of services and to provide Prevention Grant awardees flexibility, the funding was renewed annually for four subsequent years. The current awards will end on June 30, 2024 and, in the subsequent year, will be awarded through a competitive request for proposal (RFP) to be issued in early 2024. As part of the original RFP requirements and for the upcoming RFP, services are to be directed to families at-risk of contact with the child welfare system or at risk of a child’s removal from the home.

Programming Overview

Each of the Prevention Grant agencies is implementing a program unique to their community, and DCF worked with the programs to capture initial service delivery information. Services being delivered include mix of locally developed programming, which is aligned with evidence-based or evidence-informed service models (such as the Community Response program formerly piloted by the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board and [Strong Families](#)) which include formal evidence-based programs (such as [Parents as Teachers](#) and [Triple P Parenting](#)). Through a competitive request for proposals process, DCF awarded one grant to programs in six regions of the state: Northeast, Northern, Western, Southeast, Southern, and Milwaukee.

County & Agency	Services Funded with Prevention Grant
<p><i>Southern Region</i> Dane County Department of Human Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model: Early Childhood Zone – Neglect Prevention Home Visiting • Target Population: Families from the North side of Madison with children ages 0 - 4. Families are referred by child protective services (CPS) if they have at least two unsubstantiated neglect referrals. Community partners can also make referrals • Services: Home visiting services with a focus on mental health supports, housing, and other economic stability resources
<p><i>Northeast Region</i> Family & Childcare Resources of Northeast Wisconsin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models: Triple P Levels 3 & 4 and Parents as Teachers • Target Population: Families at risk of child abuse and neglect in Brown and Shawano Counties • Services: Evidence-based home visiting, discussion groups, and parent education groups

<p><i>Northern Region</i> Northwest Connection Family Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model: Community Response with Northern Enhancements • Target Population: Families in Sawyer County and Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe screened out after CPS Initial Assessment and those referred from community partners • Services: Identify immediate needs and connect families to formal and informal supports and resources; also funded are new baby visits and Parent Cafés
<p><i>Southeast Region</i> Parent’s Place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model: Community Response • Target Population: Families in Waukesha County who have been screened-out or closed after a CPS Initial Assessment • Services: Identify immediate needs, connect families to formal and informal supports and resources
<p><i>Milwaukee County</i> The Parenting Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model: Family Links • Target Population: Families in Milwaukee screened-out after CPS Initial Assessment or referred for in-home safety services; self-referrals • Services: Coordinated referrals, intensive case management, evidence-based in-home parent skills building and parent leadership development
<p><i>Western Region</i> The Parenting Place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model: Strong Families Consultant • Target Population: At-risk families in LaCrosse and Monroe Counties referred by CPS and community partners • Services: Provide families with concrete supports for basic needs or pressing family problems to enable them to participate in one of the evidence-based programs offered by The Parenting Place, such as Parents as Teachers, Triple P, Active Parents, and Nurturing Parents, among others

Program Referral Information

As noted in the prior report, referrals received by the Prevention Grant agencies continue to come from local child protective service and county human or social service agencies. Early care and childcare providers, along with educational personnel, also served as frequent referral sources. Other referral sources included:

- Community-based service providers such as local domestic abuse providers, health professionals, faith-based providers, and homeless shelter staff
- School districts
- Family or friends
- Law enforcement personnel

Population Served Description

During the pandemic, many agencies created new and innovative practices to ensure that families continued to receive highly beneficial prevention services. Data gathered by Prevention Grant agencies throughout the 2021-2022 state fiscal year period (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022) captured the following details:

❖ People who received services from the Prevention Grants ranged between 18 – 64 years, however, the majority served were adults between 20 - 39 years, and varied between parents, stepparents, grandparents, foster parents, adoptive parents, and other relative caregivers.
❖ Caregivers were mostly women, however, a large portion of men also received services.
❖ The racial background of most participants was white, black, and Hispanic; however, a large mix of other ethnic backgrounds were also served with Prevention Grants.
❖ Over half of the caregivers were either employed full or part-time or had a caregiver who was a student. Most caregivers had graduated from high school or had participated in or had a college degree.
❖ While children served by the agencies ranged from birth to 18-years-old, the majority of children served were under the age of five.
❖ Most households consisted of multiple children. The average household served through the Prevention Grants had three or more children and the median annual household income was less than \$49,000.

Key common program outcomes continued to be explored in calendar years 2021-2023 evaluation period including the following:

- Eliciting feedback from program participants related to their ability to affect positive changes in their lives because of their involvement in the respective local Prevention Grant agency program.
- Increasing the percentage of families who know who to call and where to go to seek assistance, when and if needed, following their involvement with the respective local Prevention Grant agency program.
- Improving the percentage of families who successfully complete the local Prevention Grant agency program and who successfully complete program goals.

While the above program outcomes continue to be advanced and attended to by the local Prevention Grant programs, a few notable success stories and program participant achievements are highlighted below:

- A young mother was mandated by Child Protective Services to work with the Prevent Grants agency. After reunification with her child and her subsequent graduation from the program, she continued to see the Prevention Grant as a resource to build a strong family. She would reach out to the agency when she had a parenting question/need as her child grew or as she faced routine parenting challenges. She learned about a diaper bank, eventually enrolled in the evidence-based 8-week Nurturing Parenting program. Upon graduation from that program, she also enrolled in the Parents as Teachers evidence-based home visiting opportunity for periodic sessions offering tailored coaching to match her child's developmental needs. Shelly also visited weekly playgroups and is a welcome presence for other families. Moved to action by her own appreciation for the work between herself and the Prevention Grant agency, she responded with enthusiasm when staff asked if she would share her story during an annual Family Feud game show fundraiser to encourage the audience to donate to the diaper bank. Her courage and vulnerability motivated the crowd to contribute to a successful event to benefit other families in need.
- A young mother in her early twenties with a one-year-old son was referred from Child Protective Services to her local Prevention Grants program. During her first appointment, the mother disclosed the struggles she faces each day due to her cognitive disabilities, as well as the trauma she endured with an unexpected pregnancy and leaving an abusive relationship. The mother felt that she had to give up on all her own personal goals to quickly jump into her new role as a mother. Her work with the Prevention Grants led her to enroll in college classes with hopes to receive a degree in early childhood education. She was connected to Wisconsin Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to help her navigate her education plan and receive the additional support needed both financially and academically to be successful at school. She worked on her personal goals, and family goals, more specifically, helping her reach her full potential as a mother. Some examples of the work completed together between the agency and this young mother was to improve the family functioning within her household, includes creating a daily schedule together, support to understand her babies routines/schedule and how they affect daily planning, designing a chore chart, connecting her to additional community resources. Additionally, the concerns and reasons for the initial referral were discussed. The mother expressed there has been multiple occasions where the community response program worker helped her and her partner work through an argument in a healthy manner. The agency and mother are at the fifteen-week mark together, and the mother's self-growth is very visible. She easily picks up the phone and reaches out when she

has questions, concerns, and/or scheduling appointments. Weeks ago, CRP staff would help the mother make phone calls, but now, she advocates for herself independently. Her motivation and determination to go to school and get a degree is inspiring and she truly is doing her best to not just survive anymore, but rather set goals and work to achieve them. The mother is connected to many resources and programs within her community now, which has helped her to gain a village of support for herself and her family.

Another notable area of growth and success for the Prevention Grants is the use of collaboration between community partners to increase and influence referrals, parental empowerment, achievement, and success. A notable example of collaboration is included below:

- One local agency, the Parenting Network, partners closely with the local CPS agency, The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) who continues to provide key updates including:
 - a. Referral recruitment efforts
 - b. Strategic plan development
 - c. Administrative updates
- The local agency formed policy groups which aim to improve local practice, and three Milwaukee County Accountability Program members serve as leads to incorporate family voice. The leads have been an integral part in fostering collaboration within the groups, and empowering members to actively participate by:
 - i. Planning agendas
 - ii. Facilitating discussions during the breakout sessions
 - iii. Guiding progress of the policy groups through goal setting. Fostering a collaborative relationship with the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force.
 - iv. Participating in the planning committee for the Karen Avery Forum series that spotlights the intersection of child welfare involvement, and mental illness.

Local Prevention Grant programs will continue to advance the program outcomes noted above and these program accomplishments and participant highlights will be summarized in the Prevention Grant Report due in June 2025.

Sincerely,



Emilie Amundson, Secretary
Department of Children & Families