

**Presentation for START**  
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# **A New Approach to Youth Services in Wisconsin**

# Office of Youth Services: Focus on Youth

## **The Office Youth Services was created to Support Successful Transition to Adulthood.**

- Youth who “age out” of foster care are at higher risk of homelessness, unemployment, incarceration and other negative outcomes.
- DCF’s Office of Youth Services was created in 2013 to provide stronger, more comprehensive services and support to vulnerable youth.
- OYS has spent time understanding each program funded by the Division of Safety and Permanence that provides services to transition age youth to determine whether our investment in this population is having the intended results.

# Office of Youth Services Funded Programs



# Brighter Futures Program

- Serves eligible youth age 12-21
- Funding must be directed to the 5 statutory purposes
  - Prevention and Reduction of: Youth violence, Youth Alcohol and other Drug Use, Child abuse and neglect, nonmarital pregnancy, and Increase of adolescent self-esteem
- Total funding of \$3.4 Million

# Runaway and Homeless Program

- 7 RHY Contracts, one per Youth Service Region, to nonprofits to provide direct services to youth at-risk of homelessness and runaway and homeless youth
- Programs provide emergency shelter, case management, and a variety of other services.
- Program size and emphasis vary
- Total annual funding amount of \$677,000

# Juvenile Justice

## Community Based Programs

- As of January 1, 2016, DCF is responsible for the administration of Youth Aids
- Youth Aids provides each county with an annual allocation of state and federal funds from which a county may pay for juvenile delinquency-related services, including out-of-home placements and non-residential, community-based services for juveniles.

# Juvenile Justice Community Based Programs

- The majority of juvenile justice youth are served through community-based (non-correctional) services and placements.
- DCF responsibilities will include:
  - Standards of practice
  - Training, including juvenile court intake worker training
  - Data collection and analysis
  - Program monitoring
  - Technical assistance to counties
  - Fiscal administration

# Independent Living Program

- Serves eligible youth age 15 ½ to 23
- Eligibility:
  - In Out of Home Care (OHC) at least 6 months after the age of 15 and expected to age out
  - Aged out of OHC
  - Adopted or entered into a Subsidized Guardianship agreement after the age of 16
  - Eligibility extends to 23 for youth in post-secondary receiving Education and Training Vouchers
- Total annual funding of \$2 Million

# NYTD 17 : 2014 Report Card

N= 400 Youth who turned 17 while in OHC and who completed the NYTD Survey in 2014

75% not employed



21% employed part time  
17 youth employed full time

70% had no employment training in the past year

93.5% enrolled in school

20 youth were neither working or in school

Current living situation (Top 3 responses)

41% Foster home  
23% Group care setting  
14.5% With other family members

29% have experienced homelessness

53% have moved from house to house

95% of youth have at least one adult in their life, other than their caseworker, to whom they can go for advice or emotional support

49% felt "a lot" was done while in foster care to help maintain or strengthen relationships with biological family members

35% reported "Some, but not enough"

15% reported "Nothing was done"

7% had given birth or fathered a child (28 youth)

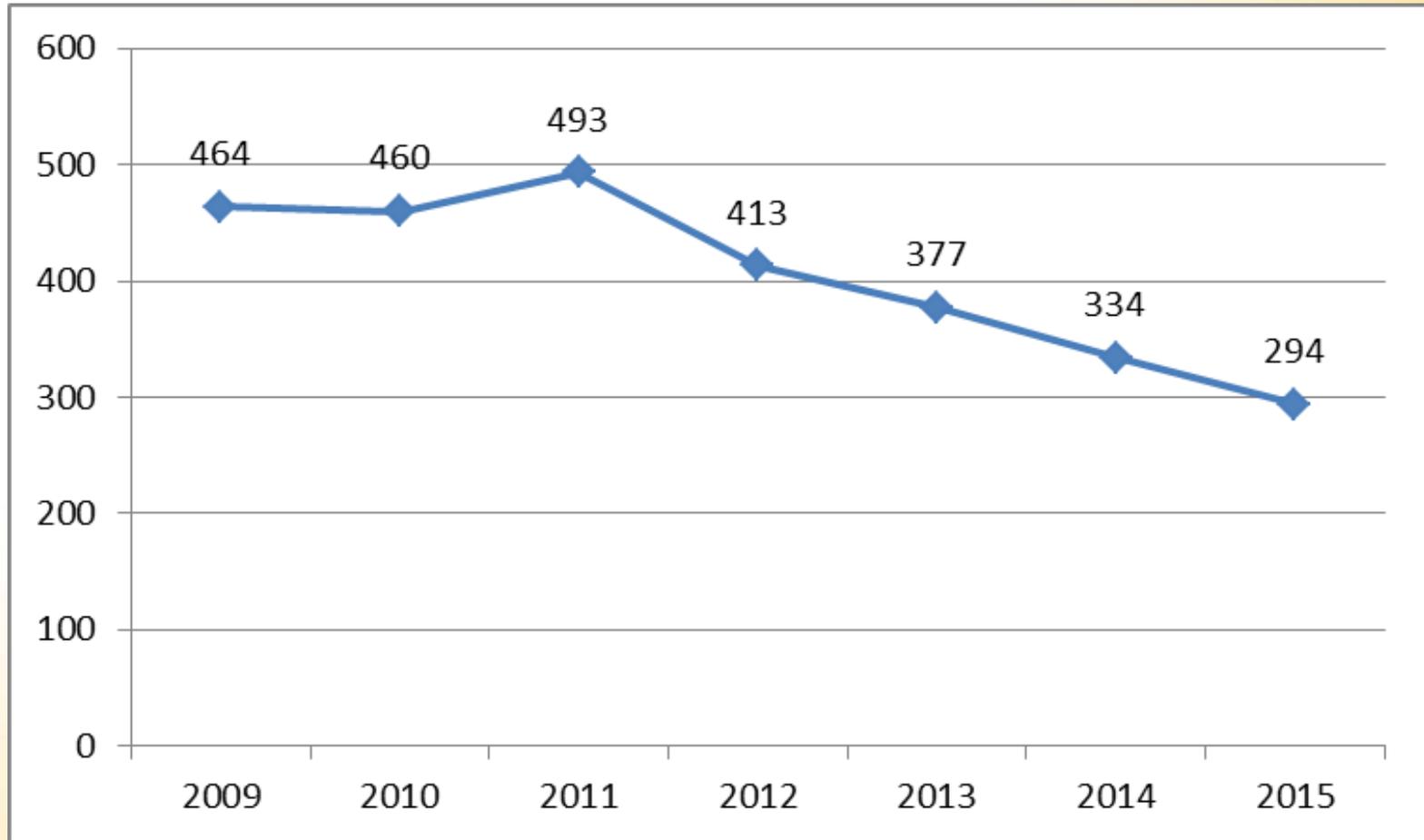
57% were receiving counseling/other treatment for a psychological or emotional problem

39% thought they would benefit from counseling

207 of 400 youth reported on their sexual identity.

85.5% Straight  
6.28% Bisexual  
4.83% Don't Know  
2.90% Gay  
0.48% Something Else

# The Number of Youth Aging out has Been Steadily Decreasing



In 2015, the youth who aged out averaged nearly 4 years in care in their life.

# NYTD 19 : 2014 Report Card

N= 150 youth who completed the NYTD 19 survey in 2014

58% not employed    21% employed part time  
21% employed full time

67% had no employment training in the past year

30% enrolled in school

4 out of 10 youth neither working or in school



Current living situation (Top 4 responses)

21.3% Own apartment, house, or trailer

20% With birth or adoptive parents

12.7% With other family members

12.7% With friends or a roommate

30.7% Homeless at some point in the past two years

51% Moved from house to house in the past two years

89% of youth have at least one adult in their life, other than their caseworker, to whom they can go for advice or emotional support

21.3% were able to maintain or strengthen relationships with biological family members in the past two years

25.3% were not able to  
11.3% were able to somewhat, but not enough

11% had given birth or fathered a child (17 youth)

47% were receiving counseling/other treatment for a psychological or emotional problem

28% thought they would benefit from counseling

71 of 150 youth reported on their sexual identity.

85.9% Straight  
11.3% Bisexual  
1.4% Transgender  
1.4% Don't Know

# Office of Youth Services

## Recent Efforts and Initiatives

- In 2014, the state legislature passed legislation extending OHC to age 21 for youth with disabilities on an IEP who have not yet graduated high school.
- Implementation began in October 2014.
- In 2014 to 2015, DCF embarked on an intensive planning process to identify key system barriers and desired outcomes for all youth.

# Creating a New Safety Net



# Vision for all youth

*All youth thrive in adulthood with the tools to achieve purposeful self-sufficiency.*

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## YOUTH THRIVE

VISION

Youth Driven

Evidence-informed

## RIGHT SERVICE AT THE RIGHT TIME

PRINCIPLE  
Low-barrier

Trauma-informed

### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Youth has a high school diploma or is on track to receive a high school diploma and has the support to pursue postsecondary education, training and employment.

### TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Youth has one paid job in the community before they turn 18.

### HOUSING FIRST

Youth is in safe, stable, and affordable housing and has access to a range of housing options.

Youth is obtaining the skills needed for jobs paying living wages, with benefits and a career path, through training and work experience.

GOALS

### PERMANENT CONNECTIONS

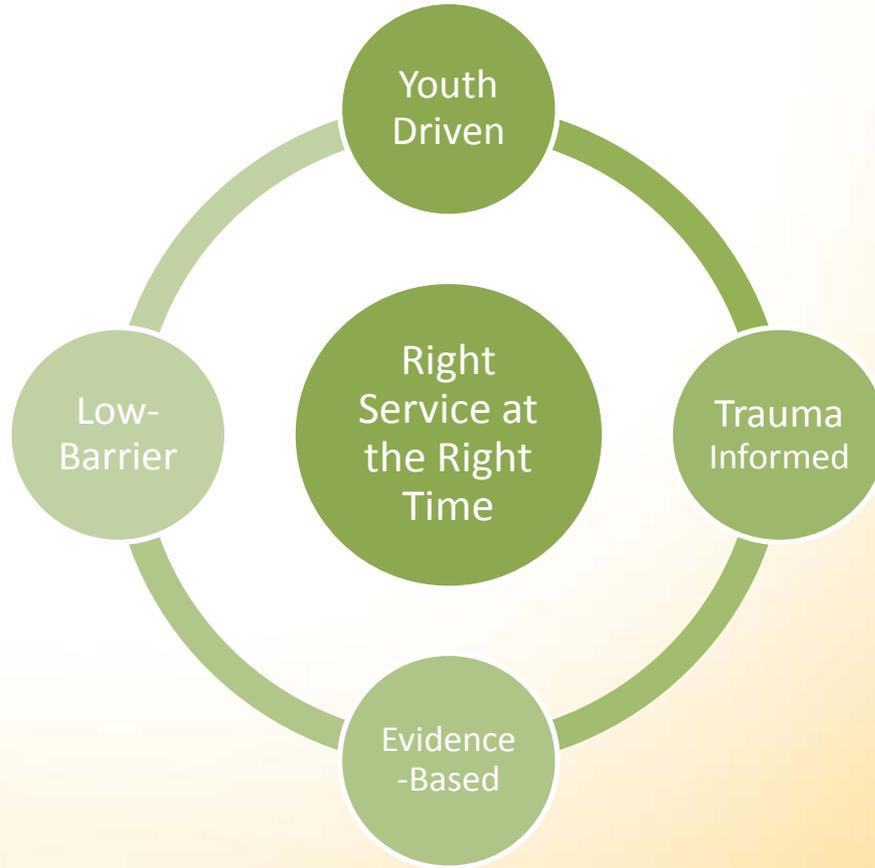
Youth is connected to multiple permanent supportive adults independent of formal systems.

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Youth is in a healthy, nurturing environment that supports social and emotional, mental, cognitive, and physical health and wellness.

FOUNDATION

# Principles of Service Delivery



# Permanent Connections (Foundational Element)

***Youth is connected to multiple permanent supportive adult independent of formal systems.***



It is critical to support youth in building and leveraging social capital by connecting them to resource-rich social networks through community organizations, social service providers, educational institutions, cultural communities.

No young person should transition to adulthood without at least one adult with whom he or she will be connected for a lifetime.

# Social and Emotional Well-Being (Foundational Element)

***Youth is in a healthy, nurturing environment that supports social and emotional, mental, cognitive and physical health and wellness.***



Socially and emotionally healthy youth will be resilient and have the ability to effectively communicate their wants and needs and cope with the routine ups and downs and stressors of life (Langford and Badeau, 2013).

# Academic Achievement (Goal)

***Every youth has a high school diploma or in on track to receive a high school diploma and has the support to pursue and complete postsecondary education, training and employment.***



Positive school experiences can counteract the negative effects of abuse, neglect, separation, and lack of permanency experienced by foster youth and other vulnerable young people. Education provides opportunities for stability and improved well-being in social and emotional, mental, cognitive, and physical domains, and supports economic success in adult life (National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, 2014).

# Training and Employment Opportunities (Goal)

*All youth have had one paid job opportunity before they turn 18 years old.*

*All youth have obtained the skills needed for employment that pays a living wage, with benefits and a career path, through training and employment opportunities.*



Workforce development programs can provide critical support to help youth and young adults become successfully employed or prepare them for post-secondary education. Early exposure to training and employment experiences that matches a young person's interests and abilities can have a profound impact on their career track and financial earnings as an adult.

# Housing First (Goal)

***All youth are in safe, stable, and affordable housing and have access to a range of housing options.***



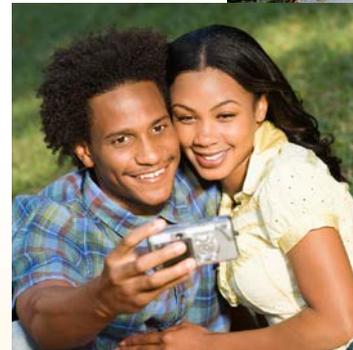
An important component of an effective youth housing model is incorporating a spectrum of housing options to appropriately respond to the broad range of needs of youth as they transition to independence (National Alliance to End Homelessness, Youth Homelessness Series, Brief Number 3).

# How do we start?

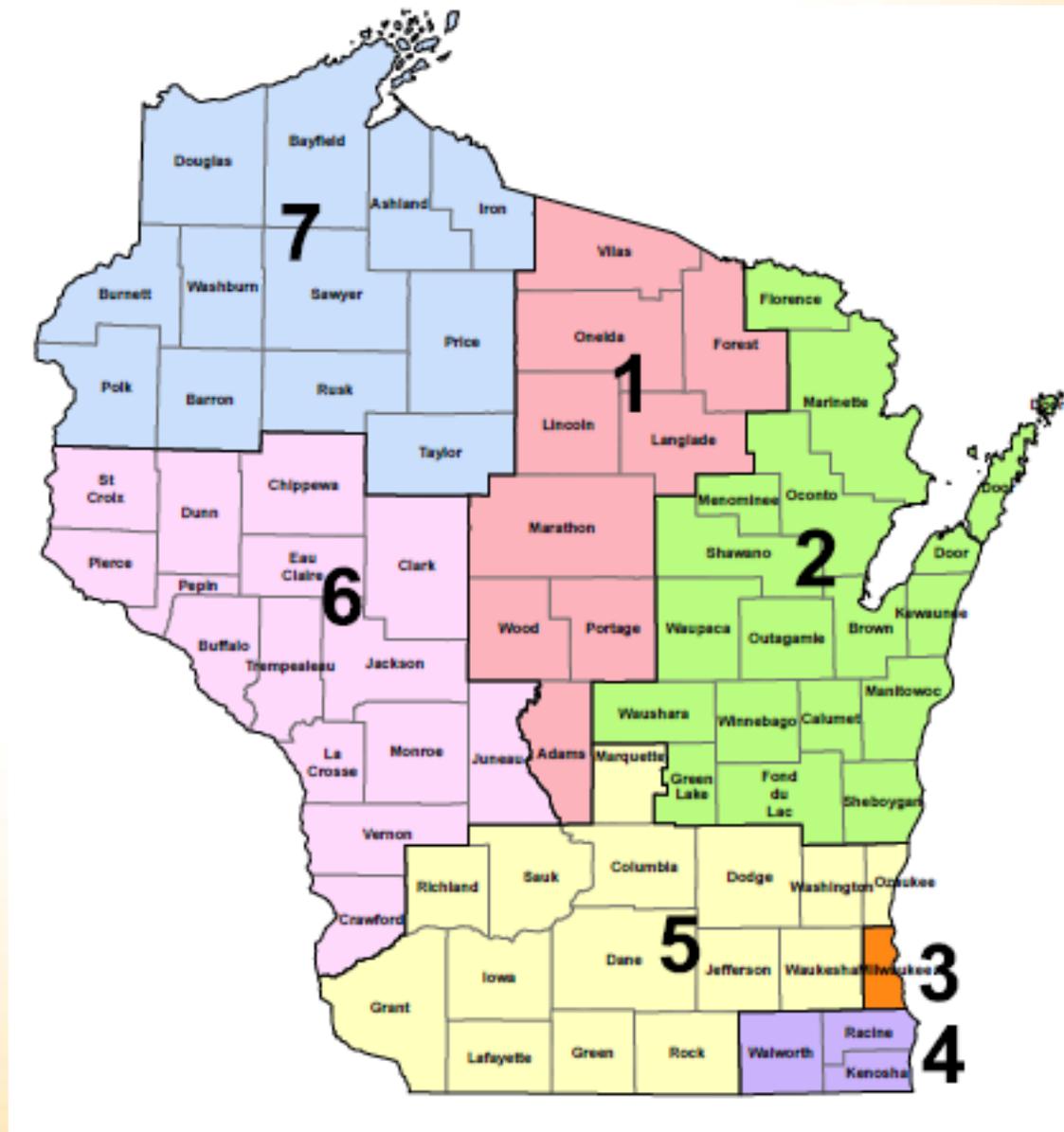
- Think about youth services as a continuum rather than a collection of single programs.
- Use the framework above to unify efforts across programs.
- Use partnerships with other agencies to streamline access to services.
- Focus on building regional capacity to serve youth in, at risk of and aged out of the child welfare system.
- Work on strengthening public/private partnerships and partnerships between programs to create more opportunities for youth.

# Vision for the Future

- More choice of how to deliver services
- No wrong door for youth
- Focus on the outcomes
- Better use of community partnerships



# Youth Services Regions



# Implementing the New Regional Approach

## – Independent Living

- Regions 2, 6 completed in 2015
  - Grantee in Region 2: Green Bay Workforce Development Board
  - Grantee in Region 6: Family and Children's Center
- Regions 1, 5, and 7 will be completed in 2016
- Regions 3, 4 will be completed in 2017

## – Runaway and Homeless Youth Program

- 7 new grantees for 2016, one in each region

## – Brighter Futures (Milwaukee and Balance of State)

- Grantees in Milwaukee and all regions other than region 6

*If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.*

- Henry Ford

# Questions?



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# Questions?



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