

Youth Justice Innovation Grants

Final Report for 2019-2021

Released March 2024

The report is available on the internet at:
www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/yj

Please email the DCF Bureau of Youth Services at DCFYJ@wisconsin.gov with any questions regarding this report.



The vision for the Wisconsin Youth Justice system is that it focuses on prevention, diversion and provides accountability and services to youth and families in the system that prepares them to thrive.”

-Youth Justice Vision
and Strategic Plan

The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access services, receive information in an alternate format, or need information translated to another language, please call the Bureau of Youth Services at (608) 266-8787. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711 to contact the department.

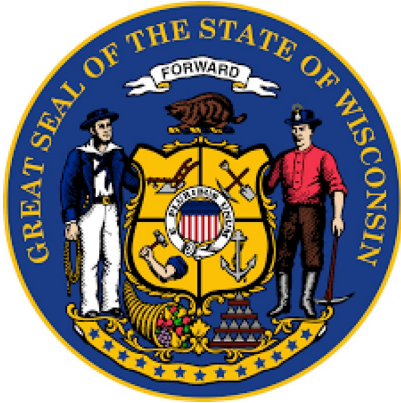


Table of Contents

Background	<u>3</u>
Project Areas	<u>4-5</u>
Alternatives to Detention	<u>4</u>
School/Justice Partnership	<u>4</u>
Community Partnership	<u>5</u>
Matching Services to Needs	<u>5</u>
County Project Profiles	<u>6</u>
Adams County	<u>7</u>
Barron County	<u>8</u>
Clark County	<u>9</u>
Dodge et al counties	<u>10</u>
Door County	<u>11</u>
Douglas County	<u>12</u>
Grant County	<u>13</u>
Iron County	<u>14</u>
Kenosha County	<u>15</u>
Kewaunee County	<u>16</u>
Manitowoc County	<u>17</u>
Menominee County	<u>18</u>
Milwaukee County	<u>19</u>
Shawano County	<u>20</u>
St. Croix County	<u>21</u>
Wood County	<u>22</u>



Background



Youth and Family Transformation

Grant projects have provided direct services to over 668 youth statewide

Between 2019 and 2021, 668 youth have been served statewide. This is in addition to the 350 youth served during the 2017-2019 grant periods covered in the previous Innovation Grant report. These grant projects were also implemented at a critical time during a pandemic; service providers and Youth Justice (YJ) professionals persevered through multiple new obstacles to meet community needs.

Impact on Wisconsin's Youth Justice System

Approach youth from a position of support rather than punishment

Youth Justice Innovation Grants have yielded several positive outcomes since 2017. County and external stakeholders have improved communication and trained hundreds of community leaders in trauma informed care. Counties are changing agency culture as well as changing the trajectory of young lives. YJ professionals are working with families to create strong case plans to bolster youth's protective capacities and reduce likelihood of recidivism.

Forward

As part of the Family First model, YJ professionals will continue to utilize evidence informed practice to support youth voice, keep families together and create a support network to avoid future system involvement. Counties and other local justice system partners are encouraged to use the information in this report to generate ideas, make connections, and move forward the Youth Justice Vision and Strategic Plan in their own communities.

Project Areas

Matching Services to Needs

The [Youth Justice Vision and Strategic Plan](#) includes the observation that “all those who encounter youth and families in the system want to be able to tailor services to risk, needs, and strengths, provide evidence-based or evidence-informed practices and programs, and provide trauma-informed care. They want to connect youth to the supports and skills they need to achieve independence”.

The most popular project area since the start of the grant opportunity has been service matching/robust case planning, which accounts for over half of all grants awarded. Research suggests assessment tools (like the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)) are most effective when paired with evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies focused on positive community support, strength-building, and cognitive-behavioral techniques.

Funding was intended to allow counties to implement a new or enhanced approach to case planning. Proposed projects were required to include the following elements: tailored services that target individual needs and strengths and concrete planning which addresses individual, family, environmental factors, and underlying behavior. It is expected the case plan is a living document that will be modified to reflect the youth’s needs over time.

Alternatives to Detention

The [Youth Justice Vision and Strategic Plan](#) includes a “desire to ensure that youth who do enter the system are held accountable in a way that allows them to repair any harm they have caused and learn from their mistakes.” This allowed counties to implement new programs or practices to reduce the use of detention for reasons other than public safety. Project proposals were required to include the following elements: a specific alternative to use of detention for consequences or sanctions, use of incentives, strength-based, skill-based, and individualized approaches, and a commitment to regular collaboration among all stakeholders involved in decisions about the use of detention.

Project Areas

Community Partnerships

The [Youth Justice Vision and Strategic Plan](#) includes the objective that youth and families are connected to services that will continue beyond system involvement, when needed. This includes connections to school, employment, other positive activities, and natural supports. This grant area was first introduced in Wisconsin in 2018. The WI child welfare system (Child Protective Services (CPS) and YJ) has been progressively working to become more family focused and collaborative. Projects were required to include the following elements: clearly defined roles and regular collaboration between all stakeholders, explanation of the skills and/or developmental assets youth will gain via services, and how the project will provide the youth (and their family) with connections to their community that will last beyond system involvement.

School – Justice Partnerships

The [Youth Justice Vision and Strategic Plan](#) includes a focus on prevention and diversion. Stakeholders identified the need to ensure that schools are not referring youth to the justice system unnecessarily. Funding is intended to reduce the instances of school-based referrals to the delinquency system.

More than ever, our schools need community supports! Projects had to include the following elements: clearly defined goals, regular collaboration between law enforcement, schools, and human services and underlying family system needs. A collaborative approach is a must in keeping our kids safe at school. Safe schools promote the protection from violence, bullying, harassment, and negative influences.

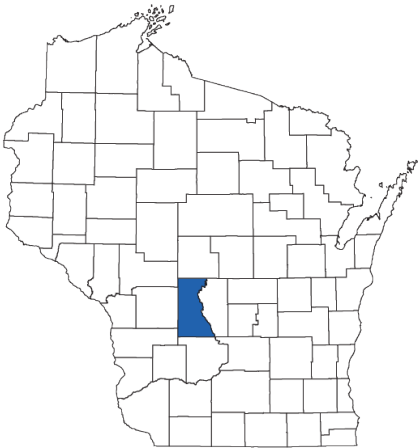


County Project Profiles

County	Total Funding Amount	Project Area	Primary Contact	Year(s) Awarded
Adams	\$181,000	Service Matching	Erin Schiferl	2019-2020; 2020-2021
Barron	\$75,000	School Justice	Karla Broten	2019-2020; 2020-2021
Clark	\$50,000	Service Matching	Trena Abbott	2021-2022
Dodge et al	\$75,000	Service Matching	Alyssa Schultz Jennifer Scharf	2019-2020; 2020-2021
Door	\$262,500	Alternatives to Detention	Dori Goddard	2019-2020; 2020-2021
Douglas	\$175,000	Service Matching	Brooke Fitzgerald Cindy Ellefson	2020-2021 2021-2022
Grant	\$75,000	Alternatives to Detention	Clark Thelemann Fred Naatz	2020-2021 2021-2022
Iron	\$150,000	School Justice	Krystal Ferrell Cally Bucknell	2019-2020 2020-2021
Kenosha	\$225,000	Alternatives to Detention	Donna Rhodes	2019-2020 2020-2021
Kewaunee	\$150,000	School Justice	Chad LaLuzerne	2019-2020 2020-2021
Manitowoc	\$262,650	Service Matching	Stacy Ledvina	2020-2021 2021-2022
Menominee	\$87,500	Service Matching	Liz Malchow	2019-2020 2020-2021
Milwaukee	\$225,000	Service Matching	Kelly Pethke	2019-2020 2020-2021
St. Croix	\$150,000	Service Matching	Brett Riberich	2019-2020 2020-2021
Shawano	\$262,000	School Justice Partnership	Jenny Stuber Rick Kane	2020-2021 2021-2022
Wood	\$262,000	Service Matching	Stephanie Wanserski Jodi Liegl	2019-2020 2020-2021



Adams County



Preserving and strengthening individuals,
families and the community.

Service Matching

Project Objective

Adams County reduced the number of youths requiring out-of-home care by targeting the entire family system with these two supportive services, Family Centered Treatment (FCT) and Teens Initiating Transformation Among Neighborhoods Program (TITAN). These programs fostered a sense of community among youth justice-involved youth while also providing them with prosocial development.

The in-home therapy model meets the needs of the entire family and shows effectiveness in 6-9 months of family engagement. TITAN is a weekly program and integrates components of Aggression Replacement Training (ART) with youth-identified community service projects.

Target Population

Youth and their families who score medium or high risk in the YASI family domain. Youth with needs identified in the YASI risk domains of community and peer, skills, and/or aggression/violence.

Project Highlight

From Adams County:

Between July 2021 and October 2021, youth had already completed five separate community projects including yard clean up for older neighbors and park clean up. These opportunities allowed the youth to positively interact with the community.



Barron County



School-Justice Partnership

Project Objective

Barron County wanted to improve the ability of students to self-regulate, thrive, and be behaviorally supported at school. The project employed one full-time staff member who provided wrap-around services to youth. The project trained system partners in trauma-informed care, restorative practices, and motivational interviewing to keep youth in school and out of the justice system.

Target Population

This program is designed to serve school aged youth ages 10-16 years old who have been identified as at risk for truancy and delinquency issues.

Project Highlight

From Barron County:

Outside of the obvious advice of “try not to start this project during a global pandemic”, a big thing that we have learned is to be flexible and creative. We did not expect to have these limitations but tried to use the resources and relationships fostered during the planning and initial implementation to be as effective as we could during uncertain times.

Our second piece of advice is to attend the calls and contact the state if you have questions or need direction on your project. It is easy to get tunnel vision in your program implementation and to continue to do things the way you are used to operating. Getting an outsider point of view sometimes helps in challenging the status quo. The meetings offer times for other counties to share and can provide similar insight if you attend with an open mind.

Clark County



Service Matching

Project Objective

Clark County started a mentorship program, trained staff in Carey Guides, Brief Intervention Tools (BITS), trauma informed care, and expanded opportunities for youth to participate in pro-social activities. The goal of this project was two-fold: 1) engage youth within their community in a positive and pro-social way and 2) improve the knowledge, skills, and resources of their social workers who supported challenging youth.

Target Population

Youth aged 10-17 working with Clark County Department of Social Services due to a law enforcement referral resulting in a deferred prosecution agreement, consent decree, or court order.

Project Highlight

From Clark County:

One youth involved in the youth justice system reduced the number of law enforcement contacts in the home from approximately 2 per week, to 0 contacts for nearly 8 weeks with the use of incentives, connection to a pro-social adult in the community, and BITS. Another youth at imminent risk of out of home placement, was able to successfully maintain placement in-home and become connected to their community with a membership to the local YMCA and the encouragement of a paid mentor.



Dodge, Columbia, Sauk & Fond du Lac Counties



Service Matching

Project Objective

Dodge, Sauk, Columbia, and Fond du Lac Counties entered a consortium and partnered with Lutheran Social Services to provide Family-Centered Treatment (FCT). The main objective of the program was to provide time-limited in-home services to keep youth at home and reduce the likelihood of further system involvement.

Target Population

The target population was defined as youth who have had contact with the youth justice system in some capacity and who were at risk for continued involvement and/or placement in secure detention.



Project Highlight

From the Consortium:

Parents sometimes struggle to see the importance of their input and their role in the process instead of only focusing on the identified child. The FCT therapist engaged the family in each session which has created relationships and sustained treatment. Engagement is huge for families. The intensive aspect of the therapy creates opportunities for families to process issues immediately. County staff have observed negative interactions in the home decreasing and less contact with LE.



Door County



Alternatives to Detention

Project Objective

Door County's project reduced the use of detention through the Youth Connection Center (YCC), which is a day reporting center. Goals included reduced use of secure detention, reduced recidivism, and shortened the length of time youth were under supervision. Daily activities were designed to increase youth competency in critical thinking and emotional regulation, as well as skill building in areas such as budgeting, shopping, food preparation, and respectful, age-appropriate behavior in public. The YCC helped youth build connections with community resources and discover their strengths.

Target Population

The target population was juveniles aged 12-18 from Gibraltar, Sevastopol, Sturgeon Bay, and Southern Door school districts who have delinquency or JIPS court orders.

Project Highlight

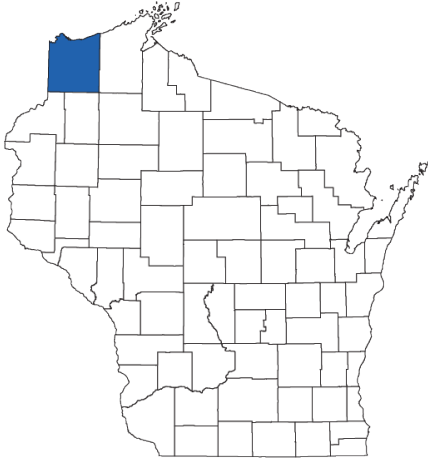
From Door County:

Our overall goal is to create a youth justice system focused on treatment and second chances rather than punishment and to increase youth self-sufficiency through skill development.

One of the primary goals of the program was to reduce recidivism rates by 25%, as measured by number of repeat juvenile referrals in eWiSACWIS and Access program compared to prior year data.



Douglas County



Service Matching

Project Objective

Douglas County utilized Functional Family Probation (FFP) model to reduce the recidivism rate of youth referred to YJ and prevent removals from the home. Staff were able to support and offer services to address the needs of each individual youth through youth-centered groups and Carey Guides. Douglas County extended Family Functional Probation training to the three school districts in the county.

Target Population

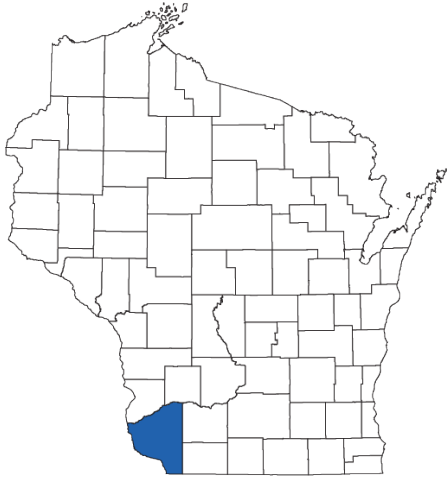
Youth and their families with YASI scores that indicate a need for programming.

Project Highlight

From Douglas County:

Douglas County considers clients to be supporters and stakeholders. We work with them very closely to determine the exact needs and strengths of their families. We promote transparency with our clients to get to the root of the issues.

Grant County



Alternatives to Detention

Project Objective

Grant County established the Teaching Healthy Relationships in Volunteering and Education (THRIVE) initiative. Primary objectives were delinquency prevention, skill acquisition, and community partnerships. The THRIVE curriculum included Carey Guides and Forward Thinking which specifically addresses criminogenic need areas and develops necessary life skills.

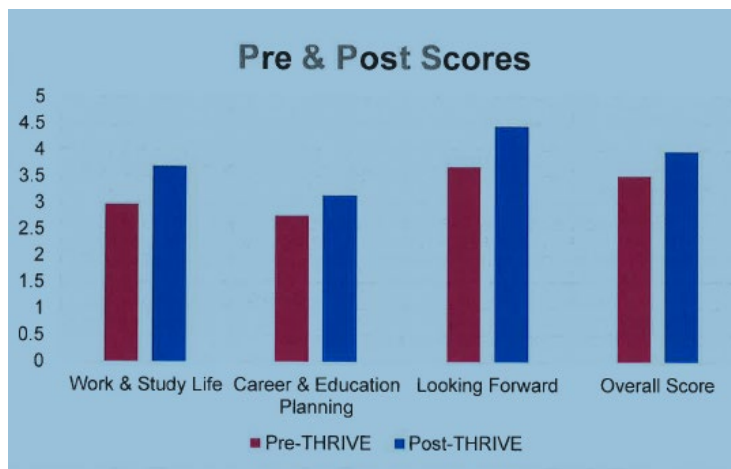
Target Population

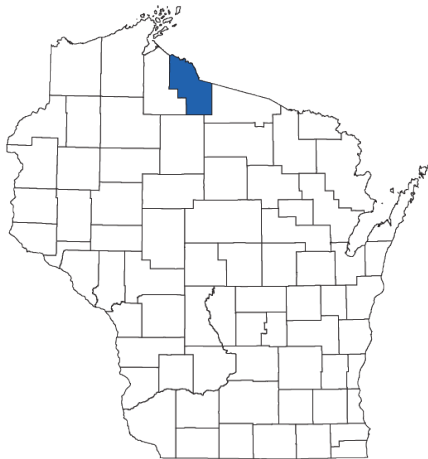
Middle and high-school aged youth referred to the YJ system who are identified as moderate to high risk on the YASI.

Project Highlight

From Grant County:

The overall score indicates participants demonstrated an increase in at least one life domain.





School-Justice Partnership

Project Objective

Iron County's truancy prevention program collaborated with youth, school, and families to identify barriers and root causes of truancy. The program assessed motivation for change and worked with the youth through the Phoenix Truancy Prevention curriculum. The program aided in improving school attendance, engagement, and grades.

The program worked with the youth and their family to identify barriers, connect with resources, and refer the youth and/or family to other programs that may be needed (AODA, mental health, mentoring, etc.).

Target Population

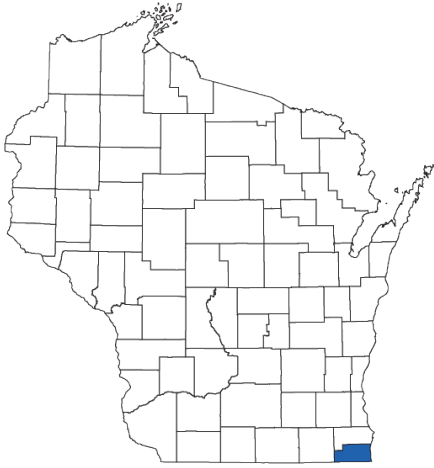
The program is for youth that are struggling with school attendance.

Project Highlight

From Iron County:

It is anticipated that Iron County and project partners will see a decrease in crisis situations, out of home placements and truancy as a result of this program. Therefore, the dollars that were being spent on out of home placements and crisis situations can be allocated to this program for the preventative type benefits to continue for the community.

Kenosha County



Alternatives to Detention

Project Objective

The Skills Corps program is an alternative to secure detention. The goal of the program is to divert youth from secure detention. Kenosha County wanted to increase the number of meaningful opportunities for youth in the community while increasing accountability, and community connections.

Target Population

The target population is adjudicated youth on supervision who have violated their court order.

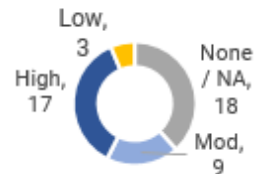
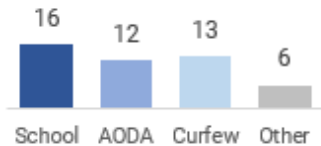


Project Highlight

From Kenosha County:

The Skills Corps program enrolled 47 youth in 2020. Of the 37 youth that exited the program, 28 were successfully diverted from secure detention, and 26 completed all program requirements or successfully completed supervision.

Seventy percent successfully diverted from secure detention for the violation that referred them, 70% successfully completed their community service hours or supervision and 55% of the total community service hours assigned to youth who exited were completed. This increased to 76% for those that successfully closed or completed supervision.



Kewaunee County



School-Justice Partnership

Project Objective

Kewaunee County created the community youth advocate position to provide youth-family services that were not available without the grant. The community youth advocate filled gaps between school-based initiatives and family home-life, through case management and direct services to youth and families identified for the initiative.

Target Population

At-risk students and their families are the targeted population.

Project Highlight

From Kewaunee County:

1. Youth justice referrals have decreased. There has been one referral and no formal petitions filed since the community youth advocate began providing services.
2. The community youth advocate has made 815 contacts with parents/guardians. Of that, only 40 were unsuccessful meaning the parents/guardian did not respond or call back. That is a 95.1% success rate.

Manitowoc County



Service Matching

Project Objective

Manitowoc County worked with stressed teens to implement Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for Teens (MBSR-T). The program taught mindfulness skills and positive coping skills. Manitowoc also implemented “Ending the Game,” a coercion resiliency curriculum for survivors of sex trafficking, and a toolbox of mindfulness activities were created that align with the needs identified by the youth’s YASI assessment.

Target Population

Youth referred to the juvenile justice system in Manitowoc County and their families.

Project Highlight

From Manitowoc County:

In March 2021, Manitowoc foster parents and Human Service staff were provided a mindfulness mason jar. Youth assisted in making these jars for all staff, which was also a great opportunity to teach the youth about mindfulness and being calm for themselves.



Menominee County



Service Matching

Project Objective

Menominee County provided mentoring to support positive youth development with a focus on youth mental health. The program (Face Everything and Rise) included monthly resilience groups, community volunteer/service-learning opportunities, and activities that focus on learning about healthy risk-taking and personal challenges.

Target Population

The community-based program was to enhance the way in which case plans are designed and managed for high school students ages 14-19 years of age.

Project Highlight

From Menominee County:

One cultural shift within our agency/community that has occurred is adolescents need community support to heal from trauma and develop social belonging. There has been an increased awareness of our youth population in this community. The YJ Innovation Grant is a great way for human service agencies to foster resiliency and help look at youth as “at promise” versus “at risk”. This grant programming is so vital for youth to be fostered for resiliency and be seen as a person versus a statistic!

Milwaukee County



Service Matching

Project Objective

Milwaukee County implemented Growth Focused Case Management (GFCM) with the help of Jonathan Cloud and the Urban Institute. The primary focus of this project was the training of CYFS and detention facility staff. Milwaukee also facilitated supervisor roundtables to provide a forum to share ideas, successes, and challenges. A long-term goal is to develop and advance internal trainers and leaders to sustain and support GFCM in the future.

Target Population

The target population served through this project are CYFS staff at all levels including supervisors, section managers, administrators, and detention staff.

Project Highlight

From Milwaukee County:

One of the wins is around staff buy-in and engagement. There have been a shift in the thinking about how we work with youth and their families. When this project was first initiated, staff were not engaged and waited for this initiative to go away. Over time, this thinking has shifted. Staff report how doing things differently have an impact on not only their work, but on the youth.

St. Croix County



Service Matching

Project Objective

St. Croix County expanded the use of Family Centered Treatment (FCT). The goal was to increase family stability and enable the necessary changes in family function to cope with challenges without system involvement. St. Croix also trained staff in Accelerated Resolution Therapy.

Target Population

The project focuses on medium and high-risk youth and their families and includes intensive, in-home therapy for youth and their families.

Project Highlight

From St. Croix County:

- 56 youth and their families engaged in Family Centered Treatment.
- Out of the 56 youth/families served, 4 were placed out of home, 8 were reunified, and 44 maintained their in-home placements at the close of FCT services.
- 98 percent of families indicated improved family functioning. 85 percent of identified youth were living at home at discharge (and at 6-month post discharge). When analyzing the data from the family assessment device, there was an 84 percent increase in family functioning of families enrolled in FCT.

Shawano County



School-Justice Partnership

Project Objective

Shawano County has developed the HARY (Helping At-Risk Youth) program. It is a diversion program which works with the youth to prevent formal referrals and the youth entering the court system. Services that are provided to youth and their families were therapy, goals, case planning, change journals, Carey Guides/BITS, and Decision Points curriculum. Contact is determined by their results of the YASI assessment tool. Risk levels and other important needs the youth need to work on determines the amount of contacts per month. In the HARY program some participants are seen 1-2 per week and some only 1 time per month. This all can change depending on their needs.

Target Population

Youth ages 8-16 that reside in Shawano County who are referred to the HARY program. Referrals may come from the parents, school staff, mental health professionals, law enforcement and other professionals. If a youth has been on supervision prior the youth will be staffed with a supervisor and this will determine the eligibility of the youth and the HARY program.

Project Highlight

From Shawano County:

Since the start of the HARY program there has been 3 individuals referred for charges to the court. There has been approximately 5-6 successful discharges from the program.

Wood County



Service Matching

Project Objective

Wood County implemented the 4-SIGHT program which focuses on interventions for self, family, friends, and community. An intensive YJ professional conducted an environmental behavioral analysis, to identify the triggers of behaviors within context of the home, school, and other environments of the youth. Upon completion of the data-driven analysis, a behavior plan is created involving incentives, skill building and alternative response identification and practice.

Target Population

The specific target population were youth aged 10-18 with emotional or behavioral issues and their families.

Project Highlight

From Wood County:

Our best measure of success of the program is in the cost savings to the county. We calculated cost savings for each youth based upon the level of care they either were in and no longer in or the level of care they were expected to be placed, without 4SIGHT intervention. Five of the seven enrolled youth were able to step down from either institutional or group home placement, which would not have occurred without the intensive services available. Below is the total cost savings, as well as the yearly cost savings. Please note that 2019 savings were calculated beginning with the program start in October 2019.

Total Savings	\$1,009, 379.61
2019	\$136, 854.72
2020	\$393,048.88
2021	\$ 479, 476.01

