

**Comparison of El Paso County, Colorado and Milwaukee County, Wisconsin
TANF and Child Welfare Systems**

El Paso County Colorado	Milwaukee
<p><i>Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) - Assessments</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More integrated to include all systems and address the multiple needs of families ➤ Families make a large proportion of decisions ➤ Ongoing Assessments – not just at initial placement ➤ Child welfare workers are placed on TANF teams to provide child safety perspective. ➤ Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse and Mental Health professionals are on site to assist in the assessment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the client prefers to see one of these professionals, they may become the coordinator of the plan 	<p>Current assessment tools measure a family’s functioning in a variety of different areas. They are designed to identify needs and obstacles in various areas including emergency needs, housing, budgeting, education and training, legal assistance, employment support, childcare, transportation and health care. However the tools, alone, do not appear to integrate the processes of various systems responsible for responding to the needs. Even after needs are identified, systems continue to work separately in addressing them.</p> <p>Families are generally told which activities they must participate in while in the program. At the same time they are not always informed of all their options. If participants do not follow recommendations they are usually considered non-compliant. Multiple incidences of non-compliance may result in termination from the program</p> <p>According to the W-2 manual, participants are to receive an initial assessment upon application for W-2 services. Another informal assessment is to be conducted prior to moving an individual to another tier of the W-2 ladder. The W-2 manual states that assessments are to be considered an ongoing activity and a regular part of case management services. Assessments are supposed to evaluate an individual’s financial, social, physical and mental circumstances. Anecdotally, assessments have not been occurring with consistency and when they do occur, they are not as effective as they should be in uncovering barriers. Previously there was no standardized assessment tool used among all agencies and workers have had much discretion in determining who receives an informal assessment and who will be referred for a formal assessment. In response to recent attention to this issue, DWD worked in partnership with UW-Milwaukee to create a standardized, more comprehensive assessment tool that is now being implemented statewide.</p> <p>Generally speaking, there are no child welfare workers present when eligibility, service provision and case plans are being determined.</p> <p>Because the four Milwaukee County W-2 providers are private contractors, there is substantial variation in the personnel and providers each agency chooses to have on site. One agency, in particular has a team of advanced practice Social Workers who specialize in substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health and disability cases. Participants with identified barriers are referred to someone on this specialized team of caseworkers. Other agencies have contracts with these types of service providers and refer clients as they deem appropriate. However, there is no consistent, coordinated effort to have such specialists on site and participating regularly in assessment and case management services.</p>
<p><i>TANF – Training</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Department offers <u>comprehensive training and cross training</u> 	<p>Currently all W-2 workers (Financial Employment Planners and Resource Specialists) must attend a new worker training within the first six months of employment. Workers are trained in a classroom setting on the W-2 program, policies and practices, case management activities, income support</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training was developed in consultation with all levels of staff ▪ Training continues to evolve ▪ All workers are required to attend a “mission possible” simulation (demonstrates the real world challenge of every day life with little or few resources). This approach encourages empathy. ▪ New staff may shadow someone in every job at the agency (including a child welfare worker) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ This helps to familiarize them with the agency, its services and the challenges of each position. ➤ Staff are required to attend diversity training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training is conducted from a strengths-based perspective – demonstrating the unique strengths of each culture. ▪ Training has been shown to be helpful in fostering better staff relationships 	<p>programs, and how to use the CARES computer system. In addition, new workers are required to have an introductory, 6-12 hours of domestic abuse awareness training within the first year of employment</p> <p>Experienced workers are required to attend new policy and refresher training courses as deemed appropriate by each agency. In addition, experienced workers must attend twelve hours of professional development training and 12 hours of enhanced case management training each year. Each training addresses one of four areas: programmatic, special needs, interpersonal or supervisory skills.</p> <p>Most trainings are developed by the Department of Workforce Solutions, the W-2 agency or a contracted agency provider, with W-2 employees having little say in their development.</p> <p>Workers receive new/updated training when policies or procedures change or when new program needs are identified. Private Milwaukee County agencies have the discretion to offer additional trainings as they see fit.</p> <p>Most trainings are conducted in a classroom setting. A "real-life" simulation training model has not been identified in any W-2 worker training.</p> <p>While training procedures vary among agencies, some agencies use “shadowing” as a way to train new workers. However, shadowing usually happens among employees of the same department. Cross systems shadowing among W-2 employees has not been identified.</p> <p>Based on material published by the Department of Workforce Development, there does not appear to be any meaningful diversity training offered to W-2 employees.</p>
<p>TANF – Making Work Pay</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Embraces the idea that in order for families to seek and maintain jobs, working must be more advantageous 	<p>Wisconsin does not have any formal diversion programs at this time. However, there are several ways in which a potential participant could be diverted from W-2 programs and services.</p>

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than receiving cash assistance.

- 1) Diversion Programs - The Department has two Diversion Programs through which families can receive the supports they need without enrolling in the cash assistance program. All diversion programs are voluntary and payments do not count toward the 60 month lifetime limit for TANF.
 - 60 Day Empowerment Program (Statewide Program)
 - Participants must be TANF-eligible, job ready and be expected to have employment in 30 to 60 days
 - Participants waive the right to TANF assistance during the 60 day period but receive flexible assistance with Child Care
 - Participants can receive services related to housing, utilities, transportation and other employment-related services as long as they are involved in a job search or other work activities.
 - Colorado Works (County program)
 - Participants may receive a one-time payment (for a crisis) which will permit the family to maintain self-sufficiency.
 - Participants are ineligible for TANF assistance for 12 months after the payment (a manager can waive this rule)
 - Payments in excess of \$1,000 must be approved by a manager
 - To qualify an individual must be at or below 185% of poverty (but not necessarily TANF-eligible).

Light Touch Policy – When W-2 began, agencies were instructed to only share information about the services that participants directly inquired about. Even if participants were eligible for certain worthwhile income support services, unless they asked about them, they would not receive application information. This came to be known as the “Light Touch Policy.” As a result of this policy, income support (Food Stamps, Medical Assistance) caseloads dropped significantly. Most employees and administrators insist that this approach is no longer used. However, anecdotally, W-2 participants claim that the “Light Touch” continues to be applied routinely.

Unsubsidized Employment – When a person applies for W-2, he or she may be considered ready for employment by the Resource Specialist of Financial Employment Planner. If this happens, the individual will remain eligible for case management services but will not receive cash assistance. According to section 7.1.0 of the W-2 manual, “If the applicant meets the eligibility criteria, but is employed or has a strong employment history and skills, the applicant may be placed on the Unsubsidized Employment (UE) rung of the W-2 ladder.” This is problematic for the many people who exhaust all employment options by the time they reach the doors of the W-2 office.

Upfront job search - Most Milwaukee County W-2 agencies require participants to attend a job training class and conduct an upfront job search prior to receiving cash assistance. This is an initial attempt to divert them from the W-2 program.

Job Access Loan (JAL) – Wisconsin offers small, short-term loans to eligible families in crisis to assist with employment-related expenses. The philosophy is that if the crisis is left unresolved, it may impact family functioning and lead to W-2 dependency. Whether or not a family is granted a JAL is at the full discretion of the caseworker. The caseworker also determines the appropriate amount of the loan as well as the repayment plan. Loan amounts range from \$25 to \$1600, with the W-2 agency required to have an annual loan average amount per W-2 participant of \$800 or less. Participants may apply for a JAL once every 36 months.

There are many anecdotes of how this process plays out in Milwaukee County. Some participants claim that certain agencies require them to produce a loan denial statement from a bank before granting a JAL. Others indicate that there is no proactive approach by W-2 agencies to help families in crisis through the JAL. Sometimes families are denied JALs even if they meet these or similar agency-specific requirements.

Emergency Assistance (EA) – Emergency assistance grants are given to individuals facing a serious family crisis due to due to fire, flood, natural disaster, energy crisis, homelessness or impending homelessness. Most EA grants in Milwaukee county are given to families who are facing eviction and homelessness. Families are eligible for EA grants once every 36 months.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Post Employment Component</u> (of County Diversion program) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Program aimed at those who are working but need help sustaining employment ▫ Low income families receive employment focused services and financial assistance (not to exceed \$1,000 in 12 months unless approved by a manager) to sustain employment or upgrade skills ▫ Participants must be at or below 185% of poverty but not necessarily TANF-eligible ▪ <u>Family Preservation Component</u> (of County Diversion Program) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Aims to stabilize at-risk families by providing crisis oriented services and support ▫ Participants must meet the emergency assistance criteria of the states pre-TANF-IV-A plan ➤ <u>2) Earned Income Disregards</u> - To assist in making work pay, the county also provides earned income disregards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ These allow families to ignore a certain portion of their earned income when the county is determining program eligibility or the amount of cash assistance for which the family may be eligible. ▪ County department policy offers more disregards than those required by the state. ▪ An employment bonus is given to those who become and remain employed for a period of time. ▪ Retrospective Budgeting – When determining 	<p>All W-2 participants may apply for EA and income is not a factor in determining eligibility. Income and asset calculations are used to determine the grant amount.</p> <p>Currently, there is no Family Preservation program (or services offered) in the W-2 program.</p> <p>Wisconsin does not offer Earned Income Disregards because the W-2 program does not determine benefit <u>amount</u> by income. Participants receive a flat grant amount depending on which tier of the W-2 ladder they are placed in. Income is only a consideration at the initial application for the program. At that point an individual is either eligible for the W-2 program and is allowed to receive services or they are not. There is not sliding benefit amount based on participant income.</p> <p>No such bonus is available to W-2 participants</p>
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<p>eligibility and payment amounts, income from the previous two months is reviewed. This is helpful in avoiding an immediate end to cash assistance when a person secures a new job.</p> <p>➤ <u>3) Work Supports</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Developed a resource referral service through local Child Care providers ▫ Parents can enroll in the Child Care subsidy program at the Child Care site ▫ Worked with Child Care providers to address the growing problem of toddlers being expelled from Child Care because of behavior issues ▪ Transition Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Available to those leaving cash assistance ▫ Team ensures that families access all benefits for which they are eligible. ▫ Located at the local workforce center ▫ Also available to all low-income families that want to improve their employment prospects ▫ Proactive approach – when someone leaves TANF for employment they are automatically assigned to a transition team 	<p>A Child Care subsidy is provided to all eligible W-2 participants and non-TANF families that require Child Care to obtain and maintain employment. Parents are required to use a portion of their income to make co-payments to providers. Co-payment amounts are partially based on family size and income and should not exceed 12% of the household gross income.</p> <p>Until recently, Child Care eligibility workers in Milwaukee County were located at the W-2 agencies, which allowed parents to apply for Child Care without traveling to another site. As of June 2003, Child Care workers will be relocated to a separate facility. All families who require Child Care services must go to the new site, as there are no outstationed Child Care enrollment locations.</p> <p>Unable to identify any such program or initiative in Milwaukee County</p> <p>Unable to identify any such program or initiative in Milwaukee County.</p> <p>When a W-2 participant leaves the program there are very few “transition activities” initiated by the caseworker. If the participant moves into the “unsubsidized employment” tier and moves into full-time work, he or she remains eligible for case management services.</p>
<p>TANF – Addressing Barriers</p>	
<p>➤ There are various services to address barriers to employment among the list of “countable work activities”</p>	<p>Generally, an individual must be placed in (and thus properly assessed for) the W-2 Transitions (W-2T) tier in order to count services that address barriers as work activities. W-2T is reserved for those participants who face multiple obstacles to employment. Participants in W2-T are allowed up to 28 hours per week in these activities. The remaining 12 hours are spent in education and/or training.</p>

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- Domestic violence services, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, vocational rehabilitation, services to address medical disabilities, faith-based mentoring and counseling, activities associated with involvement with the legal system or child welfare system.
- Sanction Prevention Teams – Sanction Prevention Teams work to prevent the number of sanctions issued to families. The sanction prevention philosophy is that the need to impose a sanction represents a failure of the team to develop an appropriate Individual Responsibility Contract (IRC)
- El Paso County has a below average low sanction rate of 3.3%
 - Before a sanction can be imposed: 1) the IRC must be reviewed by a supervisor for specific, measurable, and realistic activities. 2) Every family is sent at least two warning letters. 3) Every client is given an opportunity to demonstrate compliance or good cause for non-compliance. 4) The family may renegotiate the IRC, without penalty or consequence, if appropriate.
 - If the family cannot solve first level sanction:
 - 1) The family is referred to the Sanction Prevention Team (consumers, TANF case managers, Child Welfare workers, on-site community partners, staff from other work groups, e.g. – Food Stamps, Child Care,)
 - 2) The caseworkers try to contact the family by phone and a staffing is scheduled with the family, the team and the original TANF worker.

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Each Milwaukee County W-2 agency handles the provision of services that address barriers differently. Most agencies contract with outside providers to provide mental health services, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence services and disability support services.

Milwaukee County agencies do not currently utilize a Sanction Prevention Team. Proactive prevention of participant sanctions is not evident. This is supported by the fact that Milwaukee County agencies have the highest sanction rates in the state.

Sanction rates remain very high in Milwaukee County. According to a recent Legislative Audit Bureau report (Report 01-7), 2002 sanction rates were 21.6% for Milwaukee County and 14.6% statewide.

There have been efforts among local advocates to implement a pre-sanction review process that would identify alternatives to sanctioning. This change in procedure has not been approved.

Due to a large racial disparity in Milwaukee County sanctions and a recent audit and report documenting the trend, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has begun to review inappropriate sanctions in an effort to reduce the high sanction rates. However, sanction review efforts are limited to the most egregious cases and efforts to make systemic changes to alter the trend have been few.

Various sources have documented previously that when sanction rates have been low, DWD communicated a clear message to W-2 agencies that the rates were not high enough and work toward reversing this trend would be appropriate.

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<p>3) Team member checks to see if there is an open Child Welfare case, which can hinder TANF compliance.</p> <p>4) If the client cannot be reached by phone, a home visit is scheduled.</p> <p>5) Throughout the process, the family is given the opportunity to redevelop the IRC without penalty or consequence</p>	<p>Case Managers are supposed to reevaluate the participant case plan when sanctions occur repeatedly. However, participants indicate that this is not common practice.</p>
<p>TANF -- Community Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Agencies developed strong relationships with community providers and found ways to have these providers partner with the Department to help families acquire the tools they need. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Goodwill provides half of the case management and most of the job training, job placement and employment services to TANF clients. ➤ A 90-person staff of community partners work on site at TANF offices ➤ Community Forum – The Department convened community members to develop themes critical in moving toward the goals of ending poverty and family violence. 	<p>Milwaukee County W-2 agencies contract out a majority of services to community providers.</p> <p>For example, the Milwaukee Women's Center provides domestic violence services and Meta House provides substance abuse services for many of the local W-2 agencies.</p> <p>Each agency has the discretion to have community partners on site. Currently, most services offered by such partners are located outside of the agency.</p> <p><u>Citizen's Advisory Panel</u> - In response to a Legislative Audit Bureau report in 2001 that specifically highlighted problems with Milwaukee County W-2 agencies, DWD convened a Citizen's Advisory Panel to obtain input on the administration of W-2 services in Milwaukee County. The panel included representation from community residents, local advocates, the business sector, community-based organizations and W-2 Administrators. The panel broke off into work groups and ultimately produced recommendations for improvement. Recommendations were approved by DWD but failed to pass the State Legislature.</p> <p><u>Community Steering Committee</u> - Each W-2 agency is required to sponsor a Community Steering Committee (CSC). Section 1.7.0 of the W-2 manual states that, "Community Steering Committees are public/private partnerships established by each W-2 agency to provide ties to the local communities with strong leadership from the business sector." The primary goal of the CSC is to help identify employment and training opportunities for W-2 participants. There have been mixed reviews on the effectiveness of the CSCs. One W-2 agency has received excellent reviews for the work of its CSC and its ability to problem solve and offer important information and resources.</p>

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	<p>However, several community members have expressed concern that the process of determining who will be selected to participate in the CSC is too political. The W-2 agency puts potential names forward and the County Executive must approve the selection. Some W-2 agencies have complained about not getting the people they wanted. There has also been concern surrounding the fact that there are six CSCs (one for each W-2 region). This results in a lack of a centralized, decision making/troubleshooting body for the county. There is a consistent sentiment among many that good connections with the business community have not been made and the CSCs are used often used to advance the image of the agency without offering substantial, measurable benefits.</p> <p><u>Children's Services Network</u> – Each W-2 agency is required to have a Children's Services Network (CSN) that is responsible for linking families with needed community services. The CSN works in partnership with the W-2 agency to communicate needed resource information to agency participants. Otherwise, it is unclear whether Milwaukee County W-2 agencies have CSNs. Agency staff did not seem to have any information on the subject.</p>
<p>CHILD WELFARE (CW)</p>	
<p><i>CW -- Managed Care and Performance Based Contracts</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A significant portion of Child Welfare services are provided by private entities through performance-based managed care contracts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Department holds contractors accountable for results by requiring them to meet certain performance criteria. ▪ The Department provides a set payment within which contractors must meet the needs of the children and families within their care. ▪ Differential response to reports of maltreatment ▪ An individual course of action is determined for each family with the family participating in the plan development 	<p>Same. Wisconsin imposes fiscal sanctions for not meeting performance standards</p> <p>Safety Services has a capitated amount per family. Ongoing case management agencies receive a flat amount. Agencies must pay costs that exceed capitated or contract amounts (Both Safety and Ongoing).</p> <p>Yes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Screen out. No investigation 2. Screen in. Investigated but unsubstantiated 3. Screen in. Refer to voluntary Safety Services 4. Screen in. Place child in home under court order 5. Screen in. Place child in out of home care <p>However, there is limited structured decision-making process. Case workers make determinations based primarily on individual judgment. The definition of a case is a family rather than an individual child. Anecdotally it has been noted that the child's needs are primary, rather than the family's needs.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most cases do not involve Juvenile Court but instead, a full assessment of strengths and needs, an action plan and providing services ▪ Under Medical Assistance managed care contracts, two agencies provide mental health professionals on site who participate in the initial case review and help identify alternatives to foster care ▪ Intensive Home-based services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Families are either court-involved or receiving voluntary services ○ Many of the services provided through a managed care contract with a local network of providers who connect families with services. ▪ Foster Care Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 12 Child Placement agencies (CPAs) that are contracted (performance based managed care) to provide foster care services ○ Full assessment of the child’s mental health needs within a week of placement ○ CPAs continue to serve as care coordinators through the life of the case ○ Contractors must report indicators related to safety, permanence and improved family functioning 	<p>Initial assessments are done on all children who are screened in. There are currently more children in Foster Care than Safety Services, but more families are referred to Safety Services than out-of-home care. Further assessments depend on whether the family is referred for Safety or Ongoing services. Safety is required to do a regular Safety assessment that may or may not be strength-based. Safety Services are voluntary while Ongoing case management services are court ordered.</p> <p>Wisconsin is in the process of developing Medicaid managed care for children in out-of-home care in Milwaukee County. Under the plan all children entering care would receive a Medicaid assessment. There has been consideration given to reimbursing mental health professionals for participating in case reviews, but the plan does not explicitly say that the Mental Health professionals would recommend alternatives to foster care. Currently, agencies have a Mental Health professional and Clinical Case Specialist, on site, who conduct in-home assessments and make recommendations for the family plan. Although similar, these services are not related to those that will be offered through the Medicaid managed care plan.</p> <p>Similar. Safety Services is voluntary in-home services. Some families are receiving in-home court ordered services.</p> <p>Services are provided through a managed care type of system. Contract agencies provide case management while utilizing a network of community providers for services. Types and levels of services vary.</p> <p>Three partner organizations provide case management for all children in out-of-home care. State receives allegations of abuse, completes initial assessments and removes children when deemed necessary. Private agencies manage cases after out-of-home placement order by the court. Case management responsibility shifts to a different private agency, Children’s Services Society of Wisconsin (CSSW), if adoption proceedings begin.</p> <p>Full medical assessments are supposed to happen. According to case review analyses, it appears that they are not always completed. The Medicaid managed care plan is expected to improve the quality and frequency of the mental health assessment piece.</p> <p>See “foster care services above.”</p> <p>Data is kept on safety and permanence, but little on family functioning information. Although the cases are “family” cases, addressing the family comprehensively is seldom done. Many anecdotal</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each CPA is assigned a Department caseworker who acts as a consultant ○ Some CPAs are licensed adoption agencies 	<p>reports note the disconnect between the system and biological parents.</p> <p>Private agency staff are the caseworkers. Department staff involvement (with the exception of supervisory staff) essentially ends after the Initial Assessment.</p> <p>Separate adoption agency (CSSW.)</p>
<p><i>CW -- Community Based Services</i></p>	
<p>➤ <u>1) Out-Stationing Workers in Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initially, a child welfare worker was assigned to 4 elementary schools in a neighborhood that frequently referred children for Child Protective Services, especially for neglect. ▪ Attend weekly meetings with school staff, identify resources, make contacts with police and apartment complexes to understand the real needs and risks families face. ▪ Co-location of services in a community center ▪ Houses a Child Welfare worker in a community center who offers Child Protective Service assessments and preventive services ▪ In addition to the Child Welfare worker, 30 service providers are involved in the community center (including police, YMCA, and Head Start) <p>➤ <u>2) Community –Based Forensic Child Protection Teams</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uses three community-based forensic child protection teams (local professionals – 	<p>Child welfare workers are not out-stationed in the community. The five sites are located in various neighborhoods throughout the city and staff work from those locations. However, the physical characteristics of the sites are not welcoming and do not provide a warm, family atmosphere.</p> <p>No. Child Welfare staff sometimes meet with school staff, but not consistently. Access to schools is difficult. Consistent, coordinated Child Welfare/school communications between line level workers is not evident. Contact with police appears to be more regular based on the way some families enter/reenter the child welfare system. Sustained community relationships and initiatives between child welfare workers and police is not evident. Relationships with housing officials are varied. Some housing complexes have a social service agency right in the complex that child welfare and court workers use to meet with families. Child Welfare workers must also work regularly with housing officials to obtain housing for their clients. Again, the level of contact with housing officials appears to be based on the individual worker. No formal programs or initiatives in this area have been identified.</p> <p>Only one agency provides Safety Services, primary prevention of child abuse and neglect, family resource center and a school.</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Child Protection Center at Children’s Hospital does forensic interviews and provides some services, but is not co-located with other community services.</p>

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<p>multidisciplinary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One based at a hospital, other two based at Department offices ▪ Involve when: significant changes in family dynamics, allegation of re-abuse or neglect, new teenage mother, new allegation involving a child under six or who is developmentally delayed, or if sexual abuse occurs in an already open case <p>➤ <u>3) Multi-Systemic Approach to Adolescents</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Redirect – targets the 100 most difficult juveniles in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice systems. Team of providers provides intensive wraparound services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Used MA funds to hire young people to do outreach following welfare reform. <p>➤ <u>4) Mini-Grants to Community Groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awarded grants to eight community groups to expand services for families that do not meet criteria for regular Child Welfare services <p>➤ <u>5) Limited Court Involvement, Less Adversarial Options</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Department makes a concerted effort to avoid going to court (e.g. will pay a mother's rent if it is the only obstacle to her children returning – between 1998 and 2001 the number of court filings decreased by 50% 	<p>No. The Child Protection Center is used to perform assessment, interviews and a few services but not for changes in family dynamics. There are individual agencies who receive referrals for specific situations but there is no centralized, multi-disciplinary forensic team. An independent investigation agency investigates cases where a child has been reported to be abused while in foster care.</p> <p>The recently created FISS unit is designed to work with adolescents labeled “uncontrollable” under the old CHIPS statutes. Parents initiate the referral when the child is displaying behavior problems or in need of services. A noted problem with this has been the requirement that children must report with the parent, but for a parent having difficulty controlling a child, getting them to agree to the appointments may be difficult. The FISS program offers Safety Services to program participants, which is often an inappropriate fit. Safety Services focuses more on the needs of younger children rather than the teens who would enter the FISS program. Furthermore, the Safety Services program attempts to support families in poverty and lessen the impact of poverty on family success. , FISS participants, however, usually come from middle class families and usually come to the attention of the system because of problems such as substance abuse and domestic violence.</p> <p>No. In fact, there appears to be a decreasing amount of government-sponsored employment for teens in the community overall.</p> <p>Brighter Futures, a state-funded community-based grant program, provides grants to community agencies who serve families not eligible for Child Welfare services in the areas of intervention and primary prevention.</p> <p>No. Some agencies may assist families in similar instances, but it is not a coordinated effort to assist in matters of poverty. The recently released study by Drs. Courtney and McMurtry, “An Evaluation of Safety Services in Milwaukee” indicates that families involved with Safety Services saw financial assistance issues as their greatest need, while workers saw parenting skills as the biggest need. Additionally, the data showed that the average income for Safety Service families was well below the poverty level, while workers perceived families as having enough money but needed to “budget” better. There is a particular disconnect between workers and families with regard to income issues.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Juvenile Court promotes mediation as an alternative to trial. Everyone involved in Child Welfare meets with a trained mediator to come to agreement on issues (visitations, TPR, adoptions) 	<p>Three years ago, there was a pilot mediation project at Children’s Court that ended when funding expired. It has been explained that the implementation of the new Coordinated Service Teams will remove much of the need for a mediation project because it will expedite services to teens and families, while providing a team of experts to assist the family. Under the new Coordinated Service Team model, a detention hearing with Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) must occur within 48 hours of removal from the home. In addition, within 14 days of removal, the first Coordinated Service Team meeting must take place and a hearing with the Court Commissioner must be held to determine initial case custody and status. At this point, the court has the option to take jurisdiction of the youth, impose conditions on the youth, or throw the case out. This expedited process is currently being implemented throughout the different sites.</p>
<p><i>CW - Training</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Department entered an agreement with the local community college to provide training to foster and adoptive parents, kinship providers and Department staff. College credit is available in some cases. ➤ The Department provides 75% tuition reimbursement for Child Welfare workers and staff that want to further their education. They are allowed to spend up to 50% of their education on Department time. 	<p>Foster parent (and court ordered kinship) training is offered through St. Amelian’s. College credit does not appear to be applied. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has been contracted to provide training for staff.</p> <p>Some of the BMCW vendors provide tuition reimbursement for their staff. One example is at WCSN. If a worker takes a class, they can be reimbursed after completing the class. The content of the class must apply to the job and a B grade attained. Because the vendors have contracts with other agencies, it is likely that are different policies re: tuition reimbursement based on the policies of individual agencies.</p> <p>In BMCW, through the Title 4-E program that offers stipends, and tuition and book reimbursements for graduate social work students enrolled in the child welfare emphasis MSW program.</p> <p>Also, the state pays for selected training programs to be provided to child welfare workers, at no cost to the workers or agencies (except worker time). BMCW staff participate in those training programs.</p>
<p>CROSS SYSTEMS</p>	
<p><i>CS - Coordinated Case Planning</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Child welfare workers were assigned to TANF teams and vice versa 	<p>The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) is in the process of implementing Coordinated Care Teams (CCTs) for parents of children in out-of-home care. The philosophy is that better coordinated services will assist in speeding up reunification among families. Coordinated Care Teams will consist of the parent, the foster care worker and all agencies involved in the parents’ case plan. These individuals will work together to develop a concise, seamless service plan for the family and work to reduce obstacles faced by the family. This approach will hopefully reduce duplication of services and procedures (e.g.. paperwork) and provide the family with better access to needed resources.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every TANF IRC was assessed for child safety and every CW IRC was assessed for economic self sufficiency ▪ Ensured case plans were compatible and didn't conflict with one another 	<p>There are several concerns about the implementation of this initiative. First, all agencies do not have the same values and goals as the BMCW and therefore may not voluntarily join this process. Without the resources or an explicit mandate (which doesn't exist), many agencies may not be compelled to participate. Second many feel that the caseload of ongoing workers is too high to allow for the flexibility and time that coordinating a Care Team would require. Lastly, most systems that would participate in such an effort lack the infrastructure to allow for such an innovative approach to serving families. Most are not organized in a way that would allow for staff to dedicate such a significant amount of time and energy into one case and still be able to successfully serve their remaining caseload. In addition, policies and practices are so institutionalized that it is difficult to imagine workers changing their routine in such a drastic manner without direct orders to do so. Such a change would most certainly require demonstrated support on the part of administrators and top managers. Despite these issues, BMCW intends to move forward with plans.</p> <p>No</p> <p>No. This has been a significant issue. The matter of confidentiality and releases of information seems to present barriers to both agencies. There have been efforts to deal with the release of information issue (although it doesn't seem to be resolved yet) but coordinated case planning in general is not part of current practice.</p> <p>Note: While this is not specific to case planning, Wisconsin statutes do address the need for cross systems collaboration. Chapter 48.48(16m) reads (The Department has the authority) "To employ under the unclassified service in an office of the department that is located in a 1st class city a director of the office of urban development...who shall coordinate the provision of child welfare services in a county having a population of 500,000 or more with the implementation of the Wisconsin Works program..."</p> <p>Another example of cross system collaboration is the Wraparound Milwaukee program. Wraparound Milwaukee is a public managed care program (HMO) that targets services to families of children with severe emotional problems. It is a prevention program that works to keep children from being institutionalized. It brings together representatives from all principal systems (school, child welfare, juvenile justice, health care, etc) in an effort to develop a sound intervention plan that will improve the functioning of the client and family. Because 60% of the program participants are delinquent youth, the program may not always be an appropriate fit for those receiving Child Welfare services. However, it does demonstrate another successful effort at cross systems collaboration.</p> <p>A final example of a cross system collaboration was the Milwaukee Family Services Coordination</p>
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	<p>Initiative, which aimed to reduce barriers and build upon the strengths of vulnerable families accessing multiple systems in Milwaukee County. The pilot program lasted one year and targeted families accessing services simultaneously from W-2, child welfare and substance abuse providers. Components of the initiative included: a service “Wraparound” approach, Wraparound training for workers, cross systems workshops for consumers and staff, and a community partnership process in which community members were solicited for input on systemic problems and recommendations for improvement. The program officially ended in September of 2000 and demonstrated a number of successes including: serving 34 women and 125 children whose overall status had improved at the end of the one year pilot, Wraparound team members and staff felt that it was a valuable process, community input and ownership increased, as did communication and collaboration across systems and consumer involvement (See: “ A Framework for System Change: Evaluation of The Milwaukee Family Services Coordination Initiative http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/subst Abuse/Programs/Women'sPrograms/ExecutiveSummary.101.pdf</p>
<p>CS - Addressing Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All families who have received TANF for more than 24 months receive an in-home family assessment by a team of caseworkers (TANF and Child Welfare) ➤ Caseworkers provide voluntary services, screening, coordination of IRC activities and other support 	<p>No. If a family receives W-2 cash benefits in one W-2 “tier” for 24 months, they are no longer eligible to receive assistance. At best, if a participant has received W-2 services for more than 24 months, the W-2 worker <i>may</i> reevaluate the case plan and request an extension. However, there is no joint effort on the part of W-2 and Child Welfare workers to assess participants and provide services. There is no time limit for non-court ordered kinship care assistance (child only grants.) Family assessments and reviews are done by an independent agency contracted with BMCW, but joint planning does not occur and child only cases receive no services.</p> <p>See above</p>
<p>CS – Kinship Care Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1) <u>Family Empowerment Teams</u> - Develop Family Empowerment Teams to provide kinship families with flexible support and financial assistance ➤ Financial assistance includes child only grant, as well as additional assistance on a case by case basis. ➤ 2) <u>Developed a subsidized permanent custody program</u> – This took place if reunification was ruled out, relative agreed to care for the child but didn’t want to change their legal relationship with the child (via adoption) – The Department would provide payment up to the 	<p>No. <u>Non court-ordered kinship</u> care providers receive no formal services other than the initial “investigation,” subsequent reviews and \$215 a month. Some private agencies offer services to kinship families.</p> <p><u>Court-ordered</u> kinship care providers are supposed to receive all the same services as foster parents (some of whom are also relatives), with the exception of the reimbursement rate. Anecdotally it has been reported that court-ordered kinship providers do not receive as many services. This would be consistent with a recently released report by the Urban Institute entitled “Foster Children Placed with Relatives Often Receive Less Government Help.”</p> <p>In September, 2002, the Department of Health and Family Services submitted a waiver request to the Department of Health and Human Services (to establish a subsidized guardianship program in Wisconsin). Federal authority to grant IV - E waivers expired in September of 2002. The pending TANF Reauthorization bill, includes language extending the IV-E waivers. If that language is approved, Wisconsin’s waiver negotiations can begin.</p>

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<p>amount of foster care payments on a permanent basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relative must become permanent custodian ▪ Child welfare case is closed ▪ Kinship care staff (Child Welfare and TANF) determine appropriateness of placement and are available for on-going support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kinship providers have access to other support services such as Child Care, respite care, legal assistance and peer support groups. <p>➤ <u>3) Legal Guardianship Initiative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State District Court holds guardianship hearings. ▪ Helps relatives who want to gain legal guardianship with the parent's permission ▪ Child Welfare agency does not take custody of the child or oversee the case. ▪ Minimal court oversight (annual review) <p>➤ <u>4) Kinship Assessment Teams</u> (TANF and CHILD WELFARE workers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For those kinship providers who want or require the on-going support of the child welfare agency ▪ Team expedites foster care licensing ▪ Ensures the availability of TANF assistance until Foster Care payments are processed which prevents the placement of the child in non-relative care. ▪ Uses TANF and Child Welfare funds 	<p>The plan, as drafted, contains similar components including the relative being the permanent custodian and case closure after guardianship is finalized. Child welfare staff would make the decisions, not Child Welfare and TANF staff working together.</p> <p>The Fostering Healing Program provides services to primarily non-court ordered kinship care families that may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ short term in-home counseling, ▪ family resource specialists, ▪ child assessments for unmet needs, ▪ support services for caregivers and children, and ▪ legal advocacy in areas such as guardianship, housing, landlord-tenant issues, inheritance and denials for kinship care assistance. <p>Two community-based agencies run support groups for kinship care providers.</p> <p>Legal guardianship is available in Milwaukee County. Relative guardianship has been viewed as a viable permanency option. In 2002, 371 children had legal guardianship transferred with most guardians being relatives.</p> <p>No</p>
<p>CS - Teen Self Sufficiency Program</p> <p>➤ Program provides independent living skills,</p>	<p>Milwaukee County dissolved its Independent First program and used the funds to support outreach</p>

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<p>employment, training and support to adolescents living in foster care OR in families receiving TANF assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Funded by the federal Independent Living Program ➤ Many services available to all youth regardless of family income 	<p>efforts to encourage foster parents to educate foster youth on independent living skills and guidance.</p> <p>Milwaukee County contracts with a community agency that provides independent living services to teens aging out of foster care. Services include: subsidized community living arrangements; emergency housing support; training on basic nutrition and food preparation, personal hygiene, vocational counseling, existence of community resources, money management, and daily living skills.</p> <p>Eligibility for these programs is limited to youth aging out of foster care and regardless of income.</p>
<p><i>CS – Working with Fathers</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Center on Fathering – The Department created a program that offers fatherhood classes, conflict resolution, support groups, a resource library and referrals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Available to all fathers in the community regardless of income. ➤ Parent Opportunity Program (POP) – for non custodial parents at or below 185% of poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job training and employment services, mediation services, and referrals to legal counsel. 	<p><u>Children First Program</u> - The statewide Children First program attempts to address the needs of the non-custodial parents in Wisconsin. The program is a partnership between the non-custodial parent, the W-2 agency, the child support agency and the county judicial system. Program participants must be behind in child support payments, underemployed and have a court order mandating program participation. The program offers job search assistance, work experience, education and training opportunities, and case management services. This program appears to be lacking the social skill development and support that the El Paso model embraces. The complex eligibility requirements, including the court order, keep it from being accessible to most fathers in the community.</p> <p><u>Case Management Services</u> - Under W-2, non-custodial parents are eligible for case management services. Services provide work experience and training to unemployed and/or underemployed non-custodial parents who are unable to meet child support obligations. This is a more informal approach than the Children First program.</p>
<p><i>CS - Prevention and Early Intervention Services</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Team Success – new unit that resulted from moving two family preservation and early intervention units out of the child welfare agency and into the TANF agency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Purpose: provide services that strengthen and support families who may be at risk of child maltreatment ▪ Child Welfare workers provide more comprehensive services including economic supports if they were apart of the TANF agency. ▪ Less stigma and apprehension in going to the 	<p>As noted above, in the evaluation of the Safety Services program, families consider financial assistance as their greatest need, while Child Welfare workers cited parenting as the primary problem.</p>

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<p>TANF agency than to the child welfare agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TANF funding flexible enough to provide these services <p>➤ Direct Link – collaboration of TANF, Child Welfare, mental health, AODA providers and court officials who address the needs of, and offer resources to, families dealing with substance abuse issues, while ensuring child safety.</p>	
<p>CS - Linkages Committee</p>	
<p>➤ Serves the role of a steering committee, made up of supervisors, managers and administrators.</p> <p>➤ Goal: identify and implement linkages that promote and support collaboration between agencies in the Department</p> <p>➤ Identify and respond to training needs, and promote effective communication to name a few</p> <p>➤ Committee has three feedback groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation Team (staff from all areas of the Department) – explores ideas raised and determines whether or not implementation is realistic. ▪ Policy and Procedure Group –(Department staff) refines best practices and translates them into policies and procedures ▪ Consumer group (staff and families receiving services) – identifies areas where improvements may be needed and makes recommendations. 	<p><u>Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council</u> - The Partnership Council is a group of community providers, agency administrators, elected officials, and local residents who come together quarterly to review contracted agencies, statistics and progress as well as discuss the unmet needs of the Child Welfare system.</p> <p>Goal: The goal of the Partnership Council is to make recommendations to the Department of Health and Family Services and the Legislature regarding policies and plans to improve the system. The Partnership Council recommends funding priorities and innovative public and private funding opportunities.</p> <p>The Partnership Council has a number of subcommittees that address specific areas of the Child Welfare Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Executive Committee</u> –serves as an advisory committee and sets meeting agendas and develops bylaws, policies, and procedures. • <u>Cross Systems Subcommittee</u> –examines ways in which various systems with a common client base can coordinate efforts to improve access and outcomes for families. • <u>Intake, Initial Assessment and In-Home Services Subcommittee</u> –examines current procedures and makes recommendations for improvement in this area. • <u>Out-of Home-Case Management and Placements Subcommittee</u> – examines current procedures and makes recommendations for improvement in this area • <u>Adoptions Subcommittee</u> – examines current procedures and makes recommendations for improvement in this area <p>The Partnership Council has been considered ineffective by various community entities for a number of reasons. First, many of the members of the Council do not have a background or expertise in Child Welfare and do not understand the complexities of the system. In addition, elected officials are</p>

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	<p>appointed to the Council in an effort to advance public policies related to Child Welfare. Unfortunately, this has not occurred and there have been few significant attempts to use the recommendations of the Partnership Council to inform policy. Another consistent problem is that the attendance of members at the quarterly meetings is so low that there is rarely a quorum to vote on issues. As a result, little action is taken. There is no organized consumer group linkage to the Partnership Council. Lastly, one of the goals of the Council is to assess the effectiveness of the Child Welfare system and offer recommendations for change. In the past community members have expressed concerns over the fact that recommendations from the Council are often not given serious consideration and do not influence system change on a consistent basis.</p>
<p>Funding</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Both TANF and Child Welfare are county administered programs ➤ Colorado counties receive their TANF, Child Welfare and childcare funds in block grants from the state. Counties also receive an administrative fund block grant that is extremely flexible ➤ El Paso County participates in the state's Title IV-E managed care waiver. ➤ Colorado has a federal waiver to provide Medicaid mental health services through managed care contracts <p>Colorado counties have much flexibility around spending and program design.</p>	<p>Both Child Welfare and TANF are primarily privately run programs with oversight by public agencies except that Child Welfare state workers perform intake and initial assessment.</p> <p>The state uses an RFP process to contract for services from agencies.</p> <p>IV-E Waiver pending</p> <p>Wisconsin is working on providing health care through managed care model. The state must request a Federal Medicaid waiver to implement a managed care program for children in out-of-home care. The waiver application is in process. The anticipated start date of the program is October 2003.</p> <p>State creates much of the policy, however anecdotal reports indicate that different agencies implement programs slightly differently.</p>

This chart prepared in collaboration with Tamara Grigsby and Tanya Atkinson of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families and with the assistance of Mary Thomas, Academic Teaching Staff, Helen Bader School of Social Work at University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. June, 2003.