Wisconsin Post-Permanency Profile

Updated: November 2026

State Population (2025 Census estimate)

☒ 4 – 6,999,999 million

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance Caseload (2024)

☒ 10,000 – 13,999

- Adoption assistance caseload — 9,582
- Guardianship assistance caseload — 1,879
- Total — 11,479

State Administration Type

☒ Hybrid

Pre-Service Training

Pre-placement, initial licensing, and pre-adoption training is provided through the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System. In 2025, DCF approved a new training curriculum replacing Foster Parent Foundations, Building Forever Families, and Fostering to Forever with Nurturing Connections. DCF, in partnership with Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System, worked with Spaulding to modify and expand the National Training and Development Curriculum (NTDC) to meet Wisconsin's initial licensing training and adoptive parent training requirements. The number of training hours and content is dependent on the certification level of the foster parents' license. Pre-adoption training is 25 hours, with 6 of those hours being specific to the needs of the child to be adopted.

Ongoing and child-specific training can be completed in multiple formats such as attending webinars, conferences, reading relevant books, and consulting with a child's treatment team (i.e., therapist, OT, PT, etc.).

Foster parent training is made available to relative and like-kin caregivers pursuing foster care licensure but is no longer required for licensure. However, relative and like-kin caregivers are required to complete pre-adoption training if adoption is finalizing through the state's public adoption program.

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For more information, visit https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/fostercare/training

Services Offered Through the State's Post-Permanency Support Program

Post-permanency services in Wisconsin are provided through the Wisconsin Family Connections Center (WiFCC), a unified, statewide program providing services to parents and caregivers partnering to raise children and youth through kinship care, foster care, and post-permanency, including reunification, guardianship, and adoption. WiFCC offers services for all of Wisconsin, with staff specializing in resources and opportunities for eight different regions.

Services include:

- **Assessment** — Staff complete an informal family needs assessment and parent/caregiver stress assessment as a part of case management services.

- **Case management** — WiFCC provides short-term (up to six months) case management services for families identified as having a high need of services through a program titled Giving Incredible Families Tools for Success (GIFTS). Case management services include family needs assessment and parent/caregiver stress assessment; ongoing support with an assigned case manager via phone, online, or in person; plans to work on specific concerns; individualized parent/caregiver coaching; and referrals based on the family's identified needs.

- **Support groups** — WiFCC hosts eight different support groups. The groups typically meet virtually once a month, but some occasionally meet in person. The groups offer support to the following populations: "waiting" adoptive parents, foster parents, relative caregivers, adult adoptees, birth parents, reunified parents, teens, adoptive and guardianship caregivers, parents of children with trauma histories and challenging behaviors, as well as an informal group for adoptive and guardianship parents. Those interested can attend a group anywhere in the state regardless of where they live.

- **Information and referral** — Staff are available to provide information and referral tailored to the family's current situation. Other informational supports include a resource library with books, DVDs, and instantly downloadable resources such as tip sheets, articles, resource kits, etc. Referrals can also be provided for counseling, respite, educational advocacy, and crisis management.

- **Training** —WiFCC offers a variety of trainings on topics such as Trust-Based

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Relational Intervention®; Circle of Security®; Trauma-Informed Parenting; A Closer Look at the Core Issues in Adoption; WISE Up® About Adoption; Supporting Non-Traditional Families & Their Children at School; Talking About Race & Transracial Families. WiFCC also hosts other interactive trainings, webinars, workshops, and conferences, including events focused on relative caregiving.

- **Events** — Each of the eight regions has a free quarterly family fun event.
- **Adoption Assistance Amendments** - The WiFCC assists families with the completion of required paperwork for all Adoption Assistance Amendments requests and submit the completed request to DCF for final review. WiFCC staff assist with amendments request from the start of the request through submission to DCF, answering questions and providing initial information to families, gathering necessary medical documentation, and processing completed amendments. WiFCC staff also utilize the reported changes in the amendment requests to assist and support families with targeted service connection related to any increased needs of the child.

Relatives can also receive support services from Wisconsin's Kinship Navigator Program, which includes grants to individual agencies to provide concrete supports, brief legal services, and other support to meet the needs of relative caregivers and the children they are raising, caregiver education resources, and information and referral services. This is available to any
relative caregiver of a minor child in Wisconsin regardless of whether they have formal child welfare intervention or not.

From July through December of 2025, 7,169 contacts were made with WiFCC by families seeking information, referrals, and materials. This includes the amount of web traffic and website visits/online requests, with direct phone calls and in-person contacts accounting for about 300 of those contacts. Currently, eight to ten families receive case management services through GIFTS during each quarter.

For more information, visit https://wifamilyconnectionscenter.org/about-the-wisconsin-family-connections-center/

Geographic Area Covered

All services are offered statewide. Social events are held regularly in each of the eight regions. Support groups are facilitated virtually.

Eligible Population for the Overall Post-Permanency Program

☒ All families who adopted from the state's foster care system

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☒ All families who adopted from foster care in other states, territories, or tribes
☒ All families who adopted through private adoption
☒ All families who have guardianship of a child from foster care
☒ All families who have guardianship of child not through foster care
☒ Kinship families who are not adoptive/guardianship parents
☒ Other (listed below)

- Families reunified with their children who were in foster care
- Foster families

Variations in Eligibility for the Post-Permanency Program

None

Outreach and Engagement

Outreach to families occurs immediately after adoption finalization. All adoptive families' names should be provided to WiFCC by the agency completing the adoption. Catholic Charities, WiFCC's regional service provider, is then responsible for reaching out to families at that time.

On October 1, 2026, the adoption assistance amendment request processing transitioned to the WiFCC, with the WiFCC submitting completed documentation to DCF for final review and approval. This change provides an additional opportunity for the WiFCC to connect with families and provide them resource and service information specific to the increased needs identified in the adoption assistance amendment request.

There is no parallel outreach process for families who exit the system via guardianship.

How the Post-Permanency Program Is Operated

☒ Through contracts or grants with multiple private agencies offering different services

Notes About Who Provides Which Service(s)

The Wisconsin Family Connections Center (WiFCC) is operated by two private agencies. The state contracts with the Coalition for Children, Youth, and Families to offer statewide services and with the Journeys Program at the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La

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Crosse to offer regional support; however, there is some overlap.

The Coalition for Children, Youth, and Families is responsible for operating the information and referral line and the resource library as well as developing training and coordinating conferences. Catholic Charities has responsibility for case management, support groups, and family fun events.

Adoption/Guardianship Assistance/Subsidy Review and Changes

Wisconsin does not do any outreach to adoption families to confirm eligibility for an adoption subsidy. State law prohibits routine outreach to families based on their receipt of adoption assistance. The state reaches out to guardianship families via a letter on an annual basis to confirm eligibility. If the guardian does not return the annual review form, the monthly subsidy is suspended until it is returned. However, subsidized guardianships are county-administered (unlike adoption assistance, which is state-administered) and some counties do not consistently suspend payments when the annual review is not completed. An eligibility review for a subsidized guardian may also occur when a change in circumstance is reported to the state and prior to the youth turning 18 to confirm if payments can continue after the youth's 18th birthday.

A child may be eligible for an amendment to the adoption assistance agreement if (1) the child's emotional, behavioral, or physical needs have increased and (2) it has been at least 12 months since adoption finalization and at least 12 months since a previous denial for an amendment. An amendment is a one-year increase to the monthly subsidy. The WiFCC provides families with support and assistance in completion of the required forms and completes a child abuse and neglect background check on the adoptive parent and an assessment on the child's needs to determine if the monthly payment qualifies for an increase. The WiFCC enters in completed information and sends it to DCF for final review and approval. An amendment cannot be approved if an adoptive parent has a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect relating to the child for whom the amendment was requested. DCF is required to provide the parent with written notice of this decision and information on the parent's right to appeal that decision. If the request to increase the payment amount is approved, this will be reviewed by the agency on an annual basis to assess if the increased payment amount should continue or if a new payment amount is warranted. At least every second year, the family is asked to submit a full amendment request packet, including a parent-completed form and documentation completed by one or more professionals supporting the continuation of the increased need. On the "off" years, the family receives a letter giving them the option to continue the increased rate or to complete the full amendment request packet if they believe their child's needs have changed. Either the option to continue form or full packet must be returned for the increased rate to continue.

The full amendment request packet if they believe their child's needs have changed. Either the

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option to continue form or full packet must be returned for the increased rate to continue.

Guardians may request an amendment to their subsidized guardianship agreement to increase the amount of the monthly payments if there has been a substantial change in the child's emotional, behavioral, physical, and/or personal care needs. The guardian should notify the child welfare agency providing the subsidized guardianship payments to send the amendment request forms. The guardian can make this request 12 months after the guardianship was established or 12 months after a previous request for an amendment was denied.

After the agency receives all the required forms, they complete a child abuse and neglect background check on the guardian and an assessment on the child's needs to determine if the monthly payment amount should be increased. An amendment cannot be approved if the guardian has a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect relating to the child for whom the amendment was requested since guardian was licensed (i.e., they may have had a substantiation that was successfully rehabilitated through a rehab review to be eligible for licensing). The agency is required to provide the guardian with written notice of this decision and information on the guardian's right to appeal that decision.

If the request to increase the payment amount is approved, this will be reviewed by the agency on an annual basis to assess if the increased payment amount should continue or if a new payment amount is warranted. Amended subsidized guardianship agreements have to be reviewed annually. At least every other year, the guardian is asked to submit a full amendment request packet, including a guardian-completed form and documentation completed by one or more professionals supporting the continuation of the increased need. On the "off" years, the guardian receives a letter giving them the option to continue the increased rate or to complete the full amendment request packet if they believe the child's needs have changed. Either the option to continue form or full packet must be returned for the increased rate to continue.

Tracking Adoption/Guardianship Discontinuity

County child welfare professionals enter data into eWiSACWIS, which includes a data element on "child was previously adopted." Children who have been adopted via public adoptions in Wisconsin should always be identified as "previously adopted" in the system. It may be more challenging to know if other children were previously adopted. The same process is followed for guardianship.

Post-Permanency Program Spending (FY 2025)

☒ $1 – 1,999,999 million

Funding Sources for the Post-Permanency Program (FY 2025)

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1. State funds
2. Adoption savings (reported on CB 496 Part 4 – Annual Adoption Savings Report)
3. Adoption/Guardianship Incentive Program Payments (AIPP)

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