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**Margaret C. Carpenter**  
Administrator

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**ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO TO COUNTIES**

**MEMO # 09-02**

**DATE:** February 24, 2009

**TO:** County Departments of Human/Social Services Directors

**FROM:** Margaret C. Carpenter, Administrator 

**SUBJECT:** County Use of Risk & Needs Assessment and Classification Tools Survey Results

In October 2008, the Division informed counties that we planned to gather information on county use of Delinquency Risk & Need Assessment tools using an email survey. The purpose of this survey was to gather more complete and current information about the use of these tools across the state and to see which counties would be willing to participate in a re-validation effort of the Wisconsin Delinquency Risk & Needs Assessment and Classification tools. I want to thank counties who took the time to respond. The formation of this survey was a joint effort by DJC/County Technical Advisory Committee.

Attached are the survey results regarding the county use of Risk & Needs Assessment and Classification tools. Out of the 72 counties statewide, there were 57 counties that completed this survey. From the 57 counties that completed the survey, 33 counties use a Delinquency Risk Assessment tool; of those 33 counties, 19 counties continue to use the Revised WI Delinquency Risk Assessment tool provided by the Division of Juvenile Corrections. The survey also reveals that 24 counties have Risk and/or Needs Assessment tools that are automated and/or incorporated into their agency's information system.

In addition to the facts mentioned above, the top three uses for the information collected through the Delinquency Risk and/or Needs Assessment system were: establishing case treatment goals, making recommendations to a juvenile judge, and making decisions to refer youth to outside service providers.

Furthermore, while most responding counties feel that the WI Delinquency Risk & Needs tool is beneficial to families and youth, some suggested that the tool did not meet their needs or would prefer a more automated type response linked to the case plan. Other comments confirm that if the budget in their county would allow, they would prefer to use a valid tool that was evidence-based. Twenty-two of the 57 compliant counties would be willing to participate with the re-validation of the WI Delinquency Risk & Needs Classification tools by providing case-specific data on risk assessment scores.

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The Division continues to abide by the statutory requirement under Chapter 938.549 to make a delinquency risk assessment system available to counties and to provide the training and technical assistance by request. It is *not* the intent of the Division to mandate any Risk & Needs Assessment tool. The information gathered from this particular survey will be used both by the Division and by counties to assist in the revalidation of the WI Delinquency Risk Assessment Tool, if grant funds are found for this purpose.

Please contact Jocelyn Petersen with any questions regarding this survey at:  
[jocelyn.petersen@wisconsin.gov](mailto:jocelyn.petersen@wisconsin.gov).

cc: Rick Raemisch, Secretary, Department of Corrections  
Amy Smith, Deputy Secretary, DOC  
Ismael Ozanne, Executive Assistant, DOC  
Silvia Jackson, Assistant Administrator, DOC/DJC  
Reggie Bicha, Administrator, DCFS/DHFS  
Jill Chase, Bureau of Regulation and Licensing, DCFS/DHFS  
Patrick Cork, Interim Director of Area Administration, DHS/DES  
DES Area Administrators  
DES Human Service Area Coordinators for Children and Families  
Division of Juvenile Corrections Management staff  
County Youth Aids contacts  
Greg Van Rybroek, Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center  
Court-attached juvenile court intake offices

## RESULTS

### **Survey of County Use: Delinquency Risk & Needs Assessment and Classification Tools**

- 1) Does your county use a Delinquency Risk Assessment tool? 33 Yes 19 No (If no, proceed to question 6)
- 2) Does your county use a Needs Assessment tool? 22 Yes 20 No
- 3) Please indicate the assessment and/or classification system used:
  - 19 Revised WI Delinquency Risk Assessment (issued 1999 by the Division of Juvenile Corrections)
  - 1 PACT (Positive Achievement Change Tool) by Assessments.Com
  - 0 JAIS (Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System) by NCCD
  - 2 Youth Level of Service Inventory
  - 12 Other (please list in space below): **Jefferson County Risk Assessment, Waukesha County Risk Assessment (NCCD in '00; developed in '03; revised in '07)**
- 4) Are the Risk and/or Needs Assessment tools automated and/or incorporated into your agency's information system or WISACWIS?  
24 Yes (most often, WISACWIS) 12 No
- 5) Does your agency collect outcome data such as: number of youth who scored out as very high, high, medium, or low risk? Number of youth who showed treatment needs in various areas such as AODA, Mental Health, education, etc?  
10 Yes 24 No
- 6) How does your county use the information collected through the Delinquency Risk and/or Needs Assessment system? Check all that apply.
  - 7 Make decisions regarding detention of youth
  - 23 Make decisions to refer youth to outside service providers
  - 13 Guide for determining out-of-home placement decisions
  - 26 Establish case treatment goals
  - 25 Make recommendations to juvenile judge
  - 13 Other (please list)

- 7) If your county is not using a Delinquency Risk Assessment tool, are you considering implementing one? 11 Yes (If yes, please specify which tool)  
11 No
- 8) Do staff in your county need training on the use of the Wisconsin Delinquency Risk & Need Classification systems? 15 Yes 13 No 22 NA (don't use tools)
- 9) Any comments or suggestions about the use of Delinquency Risk/Need Assessment tools?

**Brown County:** *"We had been using the State Delinquency Risk Assessment Tool then changed over to using the CAFAS. The state was promoting the POSIT and GAIN therefore we started using POSIT 1/1/-0 on all intakes and became trained in GAIN with all intake workers and several ongoing workers. We find the information we gain from the POSIT and GAIN tools to be very helpful with work with families and youth especially with guiding the treatment plan and looking at needs."*

**Dane County:** *"The next Juvenile Delinquency Risk and Assessment tool should be eSACWIS based."*

**Douglas County:** *"Delinquency Risk/Need Assessment tools promote consistency and common language within the entire juvenile justice system."*

**Fond du Lac:** *"We have reviewed WI Del. Tools, yet prefer to use our own similar tools. We felt some areas needed to be revised in the WI model. We would like to have ours automated, haven't been able to due to cost. It would be nice if somehow it was incorporated into eSACWIS."*

**Forest County:** *"If there was local training we might consider using the tool, but travel to training like this is frowned upon by the county board. I think our decision-making would benefit from the tool but it would have to be simplistic and straight-forward."*

**Jefferson County:** *"The Delinquency Risk/Need Assessment tool supplies a lot of good information to work with the juveniles and families."*

**Manitowoc County:** *"Without the risk/needs assessment being linked to a case plan, they tend to be overlooked. We also do not do a good job of looking at risk to determine the appropriate programming for a youth."*

**Pierce County:** *"The WI Delinquency Risk & Need Classification System does not meet our needs. Therefore, we are exploring on our own a new tool that will better meet our needs and that is evidence-based."*

**Price County:** *"Since Price is a small county, the agency is familiar with the majority of the families and works very closely with law enforcement and the school districts."*

**Sheboygan County:** *"Regarding question #8, we train as needed in house but we have a very veteran JJ staff that has been doing this for many years. Regarding question #6 "other", we can use the assessment to comparatively gauge the judgment used and strategies pursued by our social worker staff. Regarding question #10, see comment in #4 (which reads, "We'll become automated within CMHC sometime after November 10, 2008")."*

**Washburn County:** *"We use the risk assessment tool in eWiSACWIS."*

- 10) If the Division of Juvenile Corrections proceeds with the re-validation of the Wisconsin Delinquency Risk & Need Classification tools, would your county be willing to participate with the re-validation by providing case-specific data on risk assessment scores? (If yes, would that data be provided through your automated system or paper?)

<u>22</u> Yes	<u>17</u> automated
<u>21</u> No	<u>5</u> paper

**Reporting Counties (57 total):**

Adams	Lafayette
Ashland	Manitowoc
Barron	Marathon
Bayfield	Marquette
Brown	Oconto
Buffalo	Oneida
Burnett	Outagamie
Calumet	Ozaukee
Chippewa	Pepin
Clark	Pierce
Columbia	Polk
Crawford	Price
Dane	Racine
Dodge	Richland
Door	Rock
Douglas	Rusk
Dunn	St. Croix
Florence	Sauk
Fond du Lac	Shawano
Forest	Sheboygan
Grant	Trempealeau
Green	Vernon
Iowa	Vilas
Jackson	Walworth
Jefferson	Washburn
Juneau	Washington
Kenosha	Waukesha
La Crosse	Waupaca
	Waushara