



# DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Wisconsin State Agency 101

A SERIES  
PREPARED BY



INSTITUTE FOR  
REFORMING GOVERNMENT

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## STATE AGENCY FAST FACTS

**\$2.9 BILLION  
BUDGET**

**NEARLY 800  
EMPLOYEES**

### AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) administers county provided services for children, youth and families. This includes child protective services, foster care and adoption, licensing of child care facilities, and child abuse investigations. The Department also administers the W-2 program which includes child care subsidies, child support enforcement, and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. The 2021-2023 budget allocated DCF almost **\$2.9 billion** and **798 positions**.

### TAXPAYER ALERT!

Since the 2011-2013 budget, funding for DCF has increased by 31% with an increase of more than **\$685 million** during that time period.

### AGENCY BUDGET GROWTH SINCE 2011:

**+31%**

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Department regularly reports to the legislature on reports of child abuse and neglect. These reports highlight the important work that needs to be done to provide safe conditions from children who are placed outside of their home.

The Department works closely with the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board. The board was created by the legislature in 1983 to support community-based and family-centered efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect.

# WISCONSIN STATE AGENCY 101

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### REFORM HISTORY

Wisconsin Works, or W-2, was a pioneering piece of welfare legislation that became a national model for welfare reform. Signed into law in 1996 by Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, W-2 replaced Wisconsin's benefits-based system with one that required individuals to find work while providing money for both school and child care.

W-2 was the first in a series of groundbreaking acts initiated by the Thompson administration to provide state-supported aid to working families and individuals in Wisconsin.

The current Department of Children and Families was created by 2007 Wisconsin Act 20, which became effective on July 1, 2008. The law divided the Department of Health and Family Services into the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, and brought back a number of the welfare-related programs from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development to the new DCF. The first secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families was Reginald Bicha.

### KEEP AN EYE ON...

Child care is going to be an important issue in the coming years. The availability and cost of child care is proving to be a barrier to some parents entering the workforce. In short, the labor shortage in the child care industry is exacerbating the labor shortage in the rest of the economy.

### DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP



**Emilie Amundson**  
*Secretary*



**Jeff Pertl**  
*Deputy Secretary*



**Nadya Perez-Reyes**  
*Assistant Deputy Secretary*

### CLOSE CALL...

In his 2021-2023 budget, Governor Evers proposed removing the use of marijuana as an eligibility factor for some of the Department's programs. Under current law, if a W-2 recipient tests positive for a controlled substance, they are required to undergo screening, testing and treatment to remain eligible for program benefits. This provision was pulled out of the budget.

### IRG WANTS TO KNOW...

If you were in charge for a day, what reforms would you make to the Department? Email Alex Ignatowski, IRG's Director of State Budget and Government Reform, at [ai@reforminggovernment.org](mailto:ai@reforminggovernment.org).

### ABOUT IRG



The Institute for Reforming Government (IRG) is a 501 (c) 3 and Wisconsin-based think tank established to help remove the onerous barriers and red tape separating the individual from an efficient and functioning government.

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