

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Program funded through federal grant to DPI will support youth with disabilities in correctional facilities with reintegration

Five-year, \$10 million grant will create cross-agency collaboration

MADISON – Federal grant funding awarded to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction will be used to support youth who exit correctional facilities in getting a public education and reintegrating successfully back into the community.

The DPI was recently awarded a five-year, \$10 million grant by the U.S. Department of Education as part of its [Disability Innovation Fund program](#). The program aims to ensure individuals with disabilities receive in-demand, good-paying jobs. The DPI, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, will create a multilevel system of reintegration support. Through this cross-agency collaboration, the first of its kind in Wisconsin, evidence-based strategies will support justice-involved youth with disabilities so they have the knowledge, resources and skills to succeed upon release from correctional facilities.

“Reentry is much more than just release – it is about giving youth the tools to build a sustainable life full of purpose and success,” State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly said. “By providing these young individuals with the guidance, education, and opportunities they need, we empower them to break the cycle and contribute positively to society. Supporting these kids is not only a step toward healing, it is an investment in their future and will save future taxpayer expenses.”

During a three-year period after release from correctional facilities, justice-involved youth show significantly higher rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration rates compared to older age groups, [according to DOC data](#). Funding from this grant program will provide training, coaching, professional development, mentorship, protocols, and integrated supports related to education and vocational rehabilitation while these youth are in corrections facilities.

Wisconsin was one of just 27 projects to receive this grant from a pool of over 800 organizations. More information on the Disability Innovation Fund program can be found [on the USDE’s website](#).

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NOTE: This news release is available online on the [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s website](#).