

**Human Services Department Report to County Board
July 2020**

AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER (ADRC)

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), coordinated locally by the ADRC, provides low-income seniors with vouchers to purchase fresh, nutritious, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs from participating farmers' markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs. This year, SFMNP will be conducted by mail, email or fax only—first come, first served. Eligible La Crosse County residents may request an application by calling the ADRC at 608-785-5700 or visiting the ADRC of La Crosse County website at <https://www.lacrossecounty.org/adrc/meals.asp> for additional options.

Transportation

The ADRC provides transportation to individuals 60 years of age or older and adults with disabilities via contracted provider, Abby Vans. During the month of May, the ADRC limited rides to essential rides only (medical and food/nutrition) and removed the co-pay requirement to be in alignment with other public transportation. Now with the Safer at Home order lifted, the ADRC is back to providing all rides but continues to not charge a co-pay until further notice.

Senior Programming, Caregiver Support

While all ADRC programs/classes/events have been canceled or postponed, the ADRC works to offer virtual programming. For instance, in lieu of cancellation of National Senior Health & Fitness Day event at Stoney Creek, the ADRC hosted a BadgerTalk by Dr. Wenker who discussed the importance of physical activity as we age. She conducted this talk via the internet as well as conference call. Additionally, Dementia Care Specialist Kelsey Flock is offering several virtual support groups and Memory Cafés and began a new program, 10 Good Minutes, which provides weekly engagement and/or relaxation via the internet for caregivers. All of these offerings are located on the ADRC's [Calendar of Events](#) on our website.

Senior Nutrition Program

ADRC congregate meal sites remain closed, however, home-delivered meals are available to individuals 60 years of age or older with food insecurities. Curbside pick-up is also available at the Holmen, Onalaska and West Salem meal sites and a "Grab 'n Go" program began in May which provides frozen meals to individuals 60 years of age or older at designated locations throughout La Crosse County.

ECONOMIC SUPPORT (ES)

Program Changes in Response to COVID-19

Several program and policy changes have been made to programs administered by the Western Region for Economic Assistance (WREA) in response to COVID-19. To address challenges customers may have in meeting review requirements and providing documentation, eligibility reviews have been pushed out by three months. Eligibility staff are assisting customers to obtain verification documents and, when necessary, foregoing verification and using best information available. Eligibility interviews for most programs have also been temporarily waived. Emergency Food Share EBT (E-EBT) benefits were issued to eligible households for March, April, May and June 2020. Under the E-EBT, households received the maximum monthly Food Share allotment benefit for their household size. With the importance of ensuring individuals maintain healthcare coverage during the pandemic, Income Maintenance (IM) Consortia were also directed to take no action to member health care cases that would terminate coverage during this time.

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S (FC)

Foster Care Events and Activities

- May was Foster Care Awareness Month. Even though most of the month was spent at home, the Foster Care Unit was able to host a virtual "Bingo Night" to bring families together safely. The event was a success as over 40 participants joined in to play Bingo together!

- A new Foster Care newsletter was launched in May to bring resources and needed information to all 120 foster homes in our program. One of our foster parent champions was delighted to put the newsletter together and will continue to do this monthly.
- On May 24, 2020, our Foster Care program was the charity of choice for David Reay's chicken que event raising over \$400 for youth in foster care. We are appreciative of David Reay's for hosting this event!
- As we look into June, the annual end of the school year celebration will be a drive-through event this year. Families will receive a pizza for dinner, a balloon for each child in the home, and a gift basket featuring fun activities that they can do together as a family.
- It has been wonderful to see the fostering community support each other as well as the children in their homes through this unprecedented time!

INTEGRATED SUPPORT & RECOVERY SERVICES (ISRS)

Children's Long- Term Support Waiver

The Children's Long-Term Support Waiver program has continued to take newly screened referrals (around 8-10 each month) during the Covid-19 pandemic and is working hard to enroll children monthly. As of May 2020, we have enrolled 35 children with 15 referrals in the process of enrollment. Currently the waitlist is at 20 children.

Triage/Intake Process

Early in 2020 the ISRS Section restructured triage/intake for consumers to access programs and services. This new process was scheduled to begin on March 1, 2020, and due to the Covid-19 pandemic has shifted to intake via telephone/email. We have been able to meet most requests for services/questions regarding service needs and are now again gearing up to open triage/intake for consumers via telephone/email/ scheduled face-to-face appointments. The ISRS section is in the process of meeting with internal and community partners to share the new process and answer questions they may have.

Out-Patient Clinic

The Out-Patient Clinic has continued to support consumers with face-to-face appointments as well as telehealth appointments with Prescribers during the past three months. We have seen an increase of referrals requesting AODA services as well as prescribing services and are working diligently to connect consumers to services and/or other resources to meet needs.

JUSTICE SUPPORT SERVICES (JSS)

Covid-19 Changes to Practice / Services

Our Juvenile Detention and Shelter facilities have quickly deployed revised policy and procedures to ensure staff and client safety and reduce potential exposure of Covid-19 within the facilities. Highlighted areas of change include:

- Reduced criteria for admission to each facility. Juvenile Detention admissions have been reduced to public safety felonies only. Shelter admissions have been reduced to emergency situations only and then reduction to 5 day stays maximum.
- Mandatory quarantine of all new admissions
- Increased cleaning protocols
- Use of PPE when necessary
- Staff screening for symptoms upon entering facility for their shift

Covid-19 Changes to Practice / Services

Our Youth Justice staff were all moved offsite to work remotely from home. They continue to employ outreach and intervention efforts virtually utilizing phone, text, email and Skype/Teams connection. Face-to-face contacts have been permitted on a case-by-case and emergency basis utilizing proper PPE and social distancing practices.

Covid-19 Changes to Practice / Services

The Adult Justice Support Services unit implemented several changes to accommodate safety precautions due to Covid-19 that include:

- All Social Work staff were moved off site to work remotely from home.

- Minimal specialist staff, reception staff, and 1 supervisor remain onsite to field calls and work with clients on a per appointment basis for GPS hook-ups, drug and alcohol testing, and monitoring.
- Drug and alcohol testing were immediately suspended mid-March as a means to keep staff and clients safe. Alternative methods of testing were researched and implemented expeditiously and on a prioritized basis. At this time testing for substances is limited to treatment court participants only. Remote breath units have been deployed for those who struggle with alcohol use. These units are a more expensive option of testing as they require a unit to be taken to a client's home where they test daily and information is then uploaded to JSS staff for monitoring. Funding opportunities have been sought to assist in the added expense for this testing option. For drug testing, urinalysis continues to be suspended, with an alternative method of sweat patch testing being deployed to Drug and OWI Court clients on a prioritized basis. These testing options allow for reduced client contact and office traffic, while still having a reliable mechanism for testing for substances.
- Office hours were also reduced to Monday – Friday 7:30 am – 5:00 pm (formerly open until 7 pm) and regular hours (7:30-3:30) on weekends.
- Social work staff have been monitoring clients on their caseloads utilizing technology (phone, email, Skype/Teams). Cognitive Behavioral groups that were once done in person have now been offered via virtual meetings. Staff have followed the court's guidance on hearing participation, which has been primarily conducted via Zoom.

Covid-19 Changes to Practice / Services

As with many other JSS programs, LAFC was also moved to work remotely from home, with primary connections being virtual. LAFC neighborhood social workers have continued to take a pro-active approach to connecting with their clients in need and partnering with community resources to make needed and meaningful connections. Huber Neighborhood Social Worker was able to deploy a neighborhood specific Facebook page to keep neighbors connected virtually and communicate resources swiftly.

Covid-19 Changes to Practice / Services

Our System of Care administrator has also moved her work offsite to connect remotely with the youth she serves. Virtual connection has remained the primary mechanism for outreach and intervention, with some emergency face-to-face contacts permitted.

Due to the uptick in family and youth needs due to Covid-19's impacts on employment and schooling, our System of Care was awarded a \$5000 grant through La Crosse Community Foundation's Emergency Response Fund to partner with local schools to assist youth who are struggling with basic needs. An article on this award and its impacts can be found at this link:

https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/hidden-heroes-covid-19-transforms-administrator-into-youth-investigator/article_af2625e2-f82a-544c-80ea-28e1d511beb5.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=user-share