

**Human Services Department Report to County Board  
March 2021**

**AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER (ADRC)**

Transportation Services

The ADRC is an annual recipient of Specialized Transportation Assistance funds as authorized by Wisconsin Statute 85.21. Any unspent funds are held in a trust for future expenses or the acquisition or maintenance of transportation equipment. Given the balance of the trust, the ADRC sought applications/requests from local non-profit service providers to assist with the purchase or maintenance of equipment used for specialized transportation. As a result, the ADRC was pleased to grant funds to three local agencies:

- \$2,700 to Aptiv for various equipment/maintenance
- \$5,200 to Benedictine Living Community for wheelchair lift
- \$2,125 to Lakeview for various equipment/maintenance

**ECONOMIC SUPPORT (ES)**

FoodShare Update

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is continuing to suspend most FoodShare interviews. The suspension, which would have ended December 31, 2020, will now continue through June 30, 2021. Applicants who only provide a name, address, and signature when they apply will still need to complete an interview. DHS is able to continue this suspension as a result of provisions in the federal Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act. When renewals resume for FoodShare, interviews may again be required.

Temporary 15% Increase in Food Share Benefits

In December, Congress approved a temporary 15% boost to the Food Share maximum benefit amount. This change will be in place from January 1 through June 30, 2021. This new assistance, in response to the financial struggles brought on by COVID-19, is in addition to the emergency Food Share benefits that have been issued since last March. The new maximum month Food Share benefit for a household of three is \$616.

**INTEGRATED SUPPORT & RECOVERY SERVICES (ISRS)**

Crisis Unit

1. The second supervisory position that was added as part of the 2021 Human Services Budget has been filled. A warm welcome to new Crisis Supervisor, Angie Smith. Angie has been a part of the Crisis team both as a mobile crisis responder and social worker for the past 10 years. She brings with her a passion to help others and eagerness to begin working collaboratively with our Human Service staff and community partners. Angie will join Sam Seefeld in co-leading the crisis team within the section.
  
2. We are in the last 6 months of the current cycle of our Collaborative Crisis Intervention Services to Youth (CCISY) grant. The 1.5 Mental Health Specialist positions that were hired due to this grant have been busy building connections within the community and within our own Human Services programs to help support youth and their families who are in crisis. Looking ahead, we are eager to get back into schools where we hope to be a thoughtful constant within the framework of supporting students.

Equally exciting, is the recent notification from the state that our CCISY grant will be renewed for another year of funding. The ISRS Crisis team will bring this renewal forward in the Spring/Summer 2021 through Resolution to the board.

**JUSTICE SUPPORT SERVICES (JSS)**

Grant Award

The Youth System of Care was awarded a grant in the amount of \$3,286 from the Department of Justice to support the use of a consistent Youth Assessment Tool (Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale – CAFAS) and database across several youth serving agencies within the community including: La Crosse System of Care, La Crosse Family YMCA, The Good Fight, and Boys and Girls Club of Greater La Crosse. By utilizing a shared assessment tool across youth serving

agencies, it is expected that the needs of youth, especially youth of color, will be better identified and met, resulting in less involvement with the youth justice system.

#### 2021 Youth Justice Protective Factors Study

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) has requested La Crosse County Youth Justice take part in a multi-state study funded by the National Institute of Justice focused on “Optimizing Supervision and Service Strategies to Reduce Reoffending: Accounting for Risks, Strengths, and Developmental Differences.” This study will prove highly beneficial to La Crosse County’s Youth Justice team as they philosophically deepen their work with youth and families in our community through the use of Functional Family Case Management Practices, which highlights natural protective factors within a youth’s life. The study is due to kick off in April 2021 and the Youth Justice team is excited for the information their participation in this study can bring to deepen their knowledge and impact on youth in their care.

Further details on the goals and benefits of this study can be found in the attached overview document.