

**Human Services Department Report to County Board  
January 2022**

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

Transportation

The ADRC is the annual recipient of Specialized Transportation Assistance as authorized by Wisconsin Statute 85.21 to provide transportation to La Crosse County residents 60 years of age and older, as well as residents 18 years and older with a disability. The service is provided by Abby Vans. Beginning January 1st, service hours will be extended (Monday-Saturday, 7:00 am-6:00 pm and Sunday, 7:00 am-2:00 pm) and service area expanded to include rides/to from La Crescent, MN. Additionally, new in 2022, all riders will call the ADRC for their first ride, to obtain a six-month authorization, but then will call Abby Vans directly for future rides. Co-pays will remain the same ranging from \$3.50 to \$4.50 per trip.

Health Promotion

The ADRC is excited to announce the continuation of two FREE exercise programs for older adults: 1) Walk with Us Wednesdays (WWUW) and 2) Staying Active Together (SAT). WWUW meets every Wednesday at 9:30 am for a walk; no registration required. During the winter/cold months, this group meets at the Terry Erickson Boys & Girls Club (1331 Clinton St, La Crosse) to walk within the facility. SAT is an hour of cardio, balance and strength exercises facilitated in-person at the Community Connections Center (1407 St Andrew St, La Crosse) or virtually on Mondays and Thursdays at 9:30 am. For more information, or to register, call the ADRC at 608-785-5700.

**ECONOMIC SUPPORT (ES)**

Emergency Supplemental Food Share Benefits due to COVID

Wisconsin continues to provide Emergency Supplemental Food Share Benefits to help during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the Emergency Supplemental Food Share benefit, all FoodShare members are receiving at least \$95 in additional benefits each month. Some households receive more to bring their benefit amount to the maximum monthly benefit amount for their household size. The Emergency Supplemental Food Share Benefit due to COVID-19 began in April 2021. While it requires federal approval each month, the supplemental benefits are tied to the national health emergency. The supplemental benefits have provided significant assistance to individuals and families struggling as a result of the pandemic. In September 2021, a total of \$2.7 million in Food Share benefits were issued in La Crosse County. For comparison to pre-pandemic amounts, a total of \$891,469.00 in Food Share benefits were issued in La Crosse County in September 2019. Given the duration of the supplemental amounts being issued, consortia are working with the Department of Health Services on communication surrounding the ending of the additional benefits that will occur with other pandemic initiatives tied to the national health emergency.

Child Care Counts Payment Program for Regulated Child Care Providers

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) launched the redesigned Child Care Counts payment program to support regulated Child Care providers in November. A total of \$351 million in funds is available over the next 18 months and will be distributed through two programs to child care providers. The first payment program aims to increase access to care for younger age children where reasonable alternatives to child care do not exist. Under this program, additional financial incentives are provided to providers who offer child care during non-standard hours and care for children with additional identified needs, such as children with disabilities receiving Birth to 3 services. The second program funds workforce recruitment and retention supports and costs associated with recruiting and retaining high-quality staff. Under this program, additional financial incentives are available to child care programs that participate in YoungStar, Wisconsin's quality rating system. Child Care providers may apply for the additional funding, with opportunities to apply each month through 2023.

Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program Annual Review

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) Bureau of Regional Operations conducted a review of the WREA consortium's Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program in October 2021. Pursuant to the Child Care Administration Contract Agreement, DCF monitors the consortium's performance and compliance with the terms of the contract on an annual basis. The review includes an evaluation of consortium staffing and operations, provision of child care selection assistance to families, quality assurance activities, handling of customer complaints, civil rights compliance, and

confidentiality and security of systems and records. WREA received no findings as a result of the 2021 annual Child Care subsidy review. The Department congratulated WREA on its continued high performance in administering the Wisconsin Shares Child Care subsidy program.