

From the Desk of County Executive Joe Parisi

Year after year, the Dane County Department of Human Services carries out incredible work to serve our community and provide a helping hand to vulnerable residents. While 2020 will long be remembered for its many challenges, it will also be remembered for the strides we were able to make in the areas of mental health, homelessness resources, eviction prevention, and other important county services.

Early on in the pandemic, Dane County and our partners worked to reserve hotel rooms to help create proper social distancing, support services, and food services for those experiencing

homelessness. In 2021, we're allocating \$9 million to ensure those facing homelessness continue to have the support and shelter they need for safe respite.

To date, we've allocated more than \$18 million in federal funding to help stabilize housing for Dane County residents at risk of eviction due to the pandemic. As federal support continues, we're committed to getting this funding out the door as quickly as possible to help tenants get the assistance they need to keep the place they call home.

We also opened Dane County's Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC)—a new, one-

stop resource for mental and behavioral health care in the county. With the BHRC now up and running, we can bridge private and public mental and behavioral health care providers—making it easier for patients, their families, and even providers to navigate care and advocate for loved ones both during and after the pandemic.

COVID-19 presented the Department of Human Services with unprecedented challenges, but our staff and partners were able to develop innovative solutions, working around the clock to provide the safety net our community needs during this challenging time. This safety net



Joe Parisi,
Dane County Executive

served Dane County well in 2020 and remains an area of pride and strength as our community heads into 2021.



Helped **489** child care centers reopen or stay open



2,662 Small Business Assistance Grants awarded worth **\$10.6** million



10,565 households received eviction prevention assistance, **87.7%** of which were headed by people of color



CCS population served up **29.5%** with **9** new provider agencies added since April



CPS had almost **3,000** face-to-face contacts so far during the pandemic—keeping our vulnerable and at-risk kids safe



Approximately **56,000** nights of shelter provided to those experiencing homelessness to protect them from COVID

From the Director's Desk

Hello friends and neighbors,

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2020 annual report. All of us have faced a year that was unexpected and unprecedented in many ways. It has been a year filled with challenges, heartache, and fear. I hope that you have also been able to find some joy in the past year. I am honored to be able to share just a few of the many triumphs the Department had in 2020, on behalf of everyone living in Dane County.

I am proud of the way our employees, our partners, and our communities have come together to serve people in this time of great need. We dramatically shifted how we meet and collaborate from an entirely face-to-face format to entirely

online; we radically redesigned our Capital Consortium call center operations to enable our employees to answer your questions about Badger Care or FoodShare benefits from the safety of their own home; we ensured safety of families by doing visits through windows and holding meetings outside in parks; and we linked arms with both existing and new partners to create social distancing in all homeless shelters to reduce the risk of the virus for those vulnerable to the disease. The stories contained in this report are just a small sample of those successes. I wish we had the space to share them all with you.

All of this is possible because of the commitment of County Executive Joe Parisi; 740

dedicated, talented, and smart Dane County Department of Human Services employees; scores of other Dane County employees supporting us; over 400 amazing community partners collaborating and innovating alongside us; engaged and responsive policymakers; and nearly 550,000 Dane County residents supporting our work. On behalf of all the clients featured in this report and the approximately 65,000 clients served in 2020, I thank each and every one of you. It has been an honor and a privilege to support the work done during a challenge of this magnitude.

We all have more work to do to make our communities safe, just, and caring. For more about



Shawn Tessmann,
Department of Human
Services Director

the priorities Dane County Department of Human Services (DCDHS) will focus on to achieve this vision, please see our [Vision: Next – 2021-2026 strategic plan](#). We are excited to deepen the collaboration with all of you.

Vision: Next – 2021-2026 strategic plan



Forgiven juvenile justice fees relief for families

The Dane County Board of Supervisors created a subcommittee of the Public Protection & Judiciary Committee in 2020 to review the fees and fines assessed throughout the civil, human services, and criminal justice systems.

This committee, in partnership with the Dane County Department of Human Services, identified juvenile justice-related fees and fines that hit struggling families particularly hard and contributed to racial disparities in the youth justice system.

Fees and fines were assessed for stays in the Juvenile Detention Center and in the Shelter Home, Home Detention and Delinquency Supervision programs. Although

these fees were eliminated in the 2019 and 2020 Dane County budgets, 560 families still owed a total of slightly more than \$1 million from previous years.

DCDHS worked with the County Board to forgive these debts, which had a significant impact on already stressed families and drove down credit scores, and notified all families of the news on December 21.

The fees and fines generated very little money for the county — on average about \$17,000 per year^[1]. The elimination of this debt is a huge win for the impacted families and will help move the needle on racial equity within the criminal justice system.



560 families had more than **\$1 million** debt forgiven.

Aging and Disability Resource Center keeps information, assistance flowing

The coronavirus pandemic caused untold disruptions in 2020, but the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Dane County never skipped a beat.

ADRC staff, with help from Dane County Information Technology staff, quickly responded when the Safer-at-Home order was issued in mid-March, moving our phone center equipment into the homes of Information & Assistance (I&A) Specialists.

The swift transition meant there was no interruption to the ADRC's mission: "To support seniors, adults with disabilities, their families and caregivers by providing useful information, assistance and education on community services and long-term care options and by serving as the single entry point

for publicly funded long-term care services while at all times respecting the rights, dignity and preference of the individual."

Callers received the same level of service that they did when they visited the office prior to the pandemic as I&As helped people navigate difficult issues exacerbated by the pandemic, including maintaining housing, getting groceries, combating social isolation, obtaining health care and dealing with job loss and other financial hardships.

In addition, the ADRC hosted a three-part "Family Caregiving During COVID-19" series that had more than 120 registrants and launched a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ADRCDaneCo/>) that has more than 800 followers.



ADRC Disability Benefits Specialist Vickie Vierig spent most of 2020 working from her home office

41,980 contacts with customers in 2020

Assisted 1,015 individuals enroll in publicly funded long-term care

AmeriCorps volunteer helps incarcerated and homeless individuals with health benefits

The coronavirus pandemic changed how Samantha works during her year as AmeriCorps BadgerCare Plus Outreach Specialist, but it certainly didn't stop her from making a major difference for individuals who are incarcerated in the Dane County Jail or visit The Beacon — Dane County's homeless day resource center.

AmeriCorps volunteers focus on a wide variety of issues, including educational achievement, economic opportunity, environmental protection, addiction recovery and community health and homelessness.

Samantha's area of expertise is helping individuals navigate the health care system and understand how to apply for BadgerCare Plus, a health care coverage program for low-income Wisconsin residents.

At the Dane County Jail, Samantha has been busy answering questions about the transition to suspended BadgerCare Plus for incarcerated individuals^[2]. She also shares a virtual presentation she created that helps people understand their post-incarceration benefits.

"Samantha has been a huge help to us at the Dane County Jail," said Sarah Wampole-Maciejeski, Re-Entry Coordinator at the jail. "Although her year of service was supposed to look a little different, she has found ways to support those incarcerated."

"The work that Samantha has done has assisted inmates in understanding benefits and receiving benefits, and allows them an opportunity to obtain follow-up care in the community. We have seen inmates calling and applying for BadgerCare Plus on their own with this information.

She has also worked behind the scenes to help the transition to suspended BadgerCare Plus for all individuals."

In addition to her work at the jail, every Wednesday morning Samantha spends three hours video chatting with guests at The Beacon and connecting them with community partners and resources for their healthcare needs. The AmeriCorps VISTA Guest Engagement Specialist at The Beacon, Jae Weller, has commented, "Samantha has been a welcome addition at The Beacon. She has helped guests

get connected to BadgerCare Plus so that they can take care of their healthcare needs."



AmeriCorps volunteer Samantha

Over 180 individuals transitioned to suspended BadgerCare in the Dane County Jail since October 2020.

Since September 2020 Samantha has helped **70** people in the community understand BadgerCare Plus, FoodShare.



A Badger Prairie resident takes a trishaw bike ride to see the Wienermobile.

 Badger Prairie Health Care Center conducted **3,959** COVID-19 tests for residents and employees in 2020.

 BPHCC admitted **8** residents from Winnebago/Mendota, saving the County money while providing less restrictive care.

 In 2020 **7** residents were discharged to lesser-care environments in the community.

Badger Prairie Health Care Center employees go above and beyond

Working at Badger Prairie Health Care Center (BPHCC) has always been both challenging and rewarding. “Challenging” took on an entirely new meaning in 2020 and, as usual, staff members rose to the occasion.

The coronavirus pandemic necessitated creating a “new normal” at BPHCC, which for residents at the 120-bed licensed skilled care nursing home operated by Dane County meant they were isolated to their care areas, weekly COVID-19 testing, daily health screenings and social distancing. For staff members, it meant enhanced personal protection equipment and endless health monitoring.

Masks and face shields created one of those new challenges.

“The way we communicate has changed,” said recreation therapist Kali Handel. “Lacking facial expression, the words that we speak and the way in which we speak them carries a new meaning. In an environment where

body language, facial expressions and a smile mean so much to our residents, we needed to adapt in order to provide the best possible living conditions in safe and friendly surroundings for those we serve. And so we did.”

Staff implemented several smaller groups per day to replace large-group activities, dining services were adapted for social distancing and family visits happened virtually or through window visits, with visitors shielded by a newly

constructed gazebo. Outdoor picnics, bonfires, a parade, and scenic rides on a trishaw bicycle entertained residents during warm weather.

Employees provided top-notch care for residents, all the while adhering to a strict and necessary code of infection control guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

The dedication and resilience demonstrated by the Badger

Prairie staff paid off in the remarkable statistic of only one resident testing positive for COVID-19.

“The way our staff, residents, family and friends of the residents and the community have come together to support each other, as well as the ways we have adapted to give the residents the best quality of life possible during these times, are the silver linings of this difficult year,” said recreation therapist Sarah Owen.



Comprehensive Community Services makes Faith's world a better place

Faith's best friend passed away in 2008, exacerbating her depression. To cope, she began overdosing on her medication as she experienced vivid nightmares that made it difficult for her to sleep.

Soon, she found herself in a hospital psychiatric ward and the Dane County Care Center for a total of 100 days.

"It's like I hit the bottom of my life," Faith said.

While hospitalized, she was referred to Comprehensive Community Services (CCS), a voluntary, community-based Dane County Department of Human Services program that provides psychosocial rehabilitation services to individuals with a mental health and/or substance use diagnosis

to help them work toward their self-identified goals.

Faith sought to learn coping skills to manage her depression and benefited from her psychotherapist and case manager being able to meet with her in-home and "see me in my natural environment."

Upon joining CCS, she struggled with leaving her home but soon found that having a skill-builder to assist with cleaning and organizing her living space allowed her to feel more comfortable going out into the community. In her first six months of receiving services, Faith removed 56 bags of garbage from her home and said it felt like that's "indicative of what I'm doing with my life – I'm really cleaning up my life."

In 2020, CCS served 1,752 individuals.

"I was about ready to do away with myself. I can smile more days than not now."

The social isolation caused by the coronavirus pandemic presented unique challenges for Faith, but her CCS providers were still able to meet with her sporadically in-person and had the flexibility to offer additional support during particularly difficult days and weeks. She also appreciated them checking in with her outside of normal business hours, including weekends.

"If not for them, I don't think I would be alive right now," Faith said.



Faith enjoys the outdoors with a smile

Amauri works with Children's Long-Term Support Program to improve life skills

Amauri's two major goals in 2020 were learning to drive and becoming a better cook. He also knew his time-management skills needed improvement.

Amauri made excellent progress in all three endeavors thanks to his determination and the support of the Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) Program, which helps children with intellectual, physical and/or emotional disabilities reach their goals through effective case management and carefully targeted services.

Like most teenagers, Amauri was eager to get his driver's license. He enrolled in a driver education course at school and his foster grandmother assisted him in practicing those skills and preparing for his test.

"We worked together about 8 hours a week for about 2 months,"

said Amauri's foster grandmother, who provides him supportive home care funded by CLTS. "All that hard work paid off when Amauri earned his 'temps' with 92% accuracy."

To help Amauri improve his cooking skills, CLTS paid for the services of the Mobility Training and Independent Living Program (MTILP). His skills developed quickly.



Amauri had the drive to drive!

"I know he enjoys making meals for the family and always wants to do a great job," said Lisa, his MTILP instructor.

Managing life takes practice, so Amauri's CLTS case manager encouraged him to work with a consultant from the Community Ties program to learn how to manage his schedule and commitments.

"We have been specifically working on the responsibility of scheduling, preparing and showing up on time... and (managing) written communication," said Arieanne of Community Ties. "I am happy to report that Amauri has not been late for our meetings in many months and has been keeping up with emails and his schedule outside of our meetings also!"

Through the supports and services provided by CLTS, Amauri gained a great deal of independence during 2020. These practical skills will be critical in helping Amauri launch successfully into adulthood.

1,383 children and youth received services from the CLTS program in 2020.

Senior Nutrition Program works with partners to keep meals coming

Mike Ziegemeier did not hesitate a few years back when asked if his Oregon restaurant had interest in becoming part of Dane County's Senior Nutrition Program, sharing that he had been looking for ways to give back. Ziegemeier had no idea then how much older adults in the community would return the favor.

When the Safer-At-Home order went into effect in mid-March 2020 at the outset of the coronavirus pandemic, all Dane County senior dining locations closed. Some of the people affected transitioned immediately to home-delivered meals because they had no other food access points. Demand for home-delivered meals soared and counts nearly doubled, causing shortages in the food chain. Finding additional capacity was critical.

Because the Senior Nutrition Program had established relationships with small,

hometown restaurants dating back to 2014, several were able to help by providing takeout meals. Older adults commented how wonderful it was to leave their homes, see familiar faces and receive tasty, nutritious food. Staff at the sites provided masks, sanitizer, toilet paper and other essentials in addition to bags of activity books, coloring supplies, craft kits and information about online exercise classes and activities to combat social isolation.

The metaphor "every cloud has a silver lining" is an optimistic image in the midst of difficulty. Ziegemeier will attest to that, saying that Ziggy's BBQ Smokehouse might have closed were it not for providing takeout meals to older adults. "It kept us from having to take out a (Paycheck Protection Program) Loan in the beginning of the pandemic as these meals were two thirds of our sales," he said. "We've been hit hard and are



Senior Nutrition Program transitions to take-out service

struggling, but senior takeout has made a difference for sure." According to Angela Velasquez, Senior Nutrition Director at the

Area Agency on Aging of Dane County, "That's what is called a 'silver lining save' by older adults."

Because the **Senior Nutrition Program** had established relationships with small, hometown restaurants dating back to 2014, several were able to help by providing takeout meals.



285,000 meals
were served in 2020;



17% more than in 2019.



Partners for After School Success provides vital resources to hundreds of students

Riley enjoys sharing a 2020 success story for Partners for After School Success (PASS) AmeriCorps.

"In September, we had a new student from the Ivory Coast who spoke very little English and was having a hard time finding friends and getting along with his peers," said Riley, a PASS AmeriCorps member at the Vera Court Neighborhood Center on Madison's Northside.

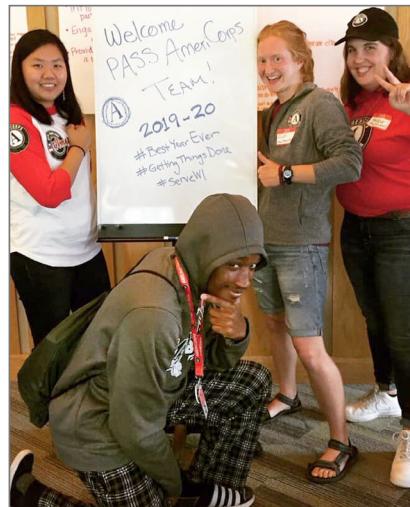
"We spoke almost entirely via Google translator, and it was very difficult to get him to do anything that he explicitly didn't want to do, both because he often didn't understand why he needed to do something, and because we didn't have much rapport so he didn't feel compelled to listen to us."

"Over the past five months we've worked on English, boundaries, and having lots of fun in the snow, and now this young person

is effectively fluently speaking English and is preparing to give a speech about bullying for a class project. He's still figuring out friendships as a sixth-grader in a new community and a new country, but I think his growth is setting the groundwork for deeper friendships, communication and confidence down the road."

Dane County administers PASS AmeriCorps in partnership with 13 host-

site agencies in resource-scarce communities, including schools and neighborhood centers. Despite the unique challenges of 2020, PASS continued, as it has for 15 years, to make a difference in the lives of youth in Dane County and nurture in AmeriCorps members a lifelong desire to be of service to their communities.



PASS AmeriCorps members

54 PASS members provided **224** students with academic tutoring

744 students participated in social/emotional skill-building activities

PASS members provided **2,685** hours in emergency response to COVID-19, including food distribution and 211 call center staffing.

Kinship Care instrumental in maintaining family bonds

Years ago, when two of Mary's granddaughters needed a new place to call home, the 60-year-old affectionately known as "Ms. Mac" wanted Ciara and Reette raised by family. Thanks to Ms. Mac's big heart and support from Dane County's Kinship Care Program, that's exactly what happened.

For children in the child welfare system who cannot live with their parents, Kinship Care may be the preferred alternative to foster care. Ms. Mac certainly thinks so after becoming the girls' legal guardian and successfully launching them into adulthood – Ciara is pursuing a social work degree and Reette earned a college athletic scholarship – while working with Kinship Care.

Dane County saw a decrease in foster care placements in 2020, while kinship placements

increased. Dane County has a strong commitment to expand programming and resources for relatives so they can successfully meet the needs of relative children. Efforts include a monthly Kinship Resource Support Group, grant money to help relative providers meet foster care licensing requirements, and a Placement Pantry offering kinship families short-term necessities (diapers, car seats, home safety items, and beds).

Dane County collaborates with community organizations that

provide support to kinship families including housing options, support groups, financial support and discounted activities.

In 2020, just when Ms. Mac thought her involvement with Kinship Care was over, her daughter asked if she could raise Little Mary. A social worker explained that if Little Mary could not live with Ms. Mac, the 2-year-old would be placed in foster care. Knowing she could rely on the Kinship Care Program's support, Ms. Mac once again stepped up to raise a family member.

"It's my heart. I knew it was the right thing to do," Ms. Mac said. "I knew I could lean on Kinship Care. I knew they could help me if no one else could. If it weren't for that program, where would you get the help?"



Ms. Mac and Little Mary

At the end of 2020, **65** youth were in court-ordered Kinship Care instead of Foster Care.

An additional **209** youth were in voluntary kinship arrangements.

Vocational Futures Planning and Support

Employment services are now available for participants of long-term care services under the Medicaid home and community-based services program. Included are Family Care, Partnership, IRIS the [Community Options Program Waiver](#) (COP-W) and the Community Integration Program (CIP). Learn more from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to expand habilitation services and support individuals with disabilities to live independently as well as "vocational futures planning."

Vocational Futures Planning and Support Program helps Logan land perfect job

For Logan, working at a job has not always come naturally.

That changed when he was introduced to Dane County's Vocational Futures Planning and Support (VFPS) Program, which assists young people with significant disabilities in identifying jobs that utilize their specific strengths.

During high school, Logan's team provided him opportunities to try many different job tasks through volunteer and paid employment experiences. Through these trials, the team recognized that Logan is at his best when he has a highly structured job with clear steps to follow to complete each task.

With this in mind, Logan's team helped him gain employment at Forage Kombucha, where he folds and labels shipping boxes. The instructions for each task are very clear and Logan has mastered each one. Since starting his job, Logan has increased his work stamina from 10

minutes to more than an hour without taking a break.

"Logan has been helpful from his very first day at work," said Mary, his supervisor at Forage Kombucha. "He shows up to work excited to get his job done. Over time, we have been lucky to get to know several people from Logan's supportive employment team."

Forage Kombucha recognizes that Logan has the right skills for the tasks it needs done. By offering a job to Logan, he is able to earn money to spend on things he needs and enjoys. In addition, he connects with coworkers and experiences what it is like to be part of a team. Logan can take pride in knowing that he is contributing to his community through his hard work.



Logan labels boxes at Forage Kombucha

"It is clear how helpful this working relationship has been for both Logan and those of us who work at Forage. We look forward to working with Logan long term."

– Mary, Forage Kombucha

Joining Forces for Families works tirelessly to address basic human needs

Joining Forces for Families (JFF) distributed \$500,000 of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act federal funding along with \$235,000 in Homeless Prevention Funds from its annual budget to stabilize housing and prevent eviction in 2020 – a year that was so difficult for so many families.

The dollar amounts get the headlines, but the funding allocations are just the beginning of the aid provided by JFF, a voluntary, community-based, supportive service that helps families address their basic human needs. By quickly linking clients to resources, JFF often keeps families stable and directs them away from costly formal system interventions.

Over 1,000 households, including 2,150 children, received assistance through JFF and the CARES Act.

Beyond the impact of helping families paying rent owed, each of the allocations involved making a connection with a family and offering additional support. In each case, JFF workers had a conversation to understand the family's unique situation, assessed the options available for additional support, advocated with property owners to coordinate documentation requirements, and offered one-on-one help connecting families to other community resources.

In 2021, JFF will build off the success of this rollout by utilizing the connections made with community members, service providers, non-profits and landlords to help ensure continued and equitable access to

support for those in need. Stable housing is a fundamental building block for success with any family and in any community.

JFF's access to CARES Act assistance extended a lifeline to many families, creating the possibility for families to remain in their homes and connected to the schools, community supports, employment opportunities, neighbors and friends important to each of us.



JFF's Russett Road office helps families stay in their own homes

Allocations:

- 37% to Hispanic/Latino families
- 33% to Black/African American families
- 12% to White families
- 9% to Bi-racial families
- 61% to single-parent households

Sheltering program helps protect most vulnerable neighbors during pandemic

Creating social distancing in Dane County's congregate shelter system for people experiencing homelessness was critical to limiting the spread of COVID-19 among some of our most vulnerable neighbors in 2020.

At the outset of the pandemic in mid-March, Dane County's Housing Access & Affordability (HAA) Division partnered with six area hotels to create additional shelter space for:

- Individuals experiencing homelessness, who, per the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, are at higher risk for severe illness if they contract COVID-19;
- Families with children experiencing homelessness; and...
- People experiencing homelessness who test positive for COVID-19 and need a safe place to isolate and recover.

A primary goal of this program, after ensuring people are safe, is to connect them with housing and supportive services. This program grew exponentially over the last nine months of 2020, with more than 900 guests sheltered and zero COVID-19 related deaths. HAA partnered with catering companies to provide three nutritious meals per day. In addition, there were housing navigators from Catholic Charities at several hotels, as well as on-site support specialists and case managers from Focus Counseling.

More than 72 households successfully moved from a shelter hotel into permanent housing, and HAA continues to work with the City of Madison and our agency partners to fill rooms that become available.

This program is a clear example of a community quickly coming together to support those disproportionately affected by the pandemic. HAA collaborated with local agencies that provide frontline services to people experiencing homelessness, the City of Madison, Public Health Madison & Dane County and many others to quickly implement and continue to provide this critical service. Every partner involved has been fully committed to making it a success, and each one has HAA's deepest gratitude.

900 guests sheltered.

72 households moved from shelter to permanent housing.

Transportation Academy alumna forges own path to employment success

Miriam Morales is a leader and a trailblazer. The Dane County Highway Department employee is also a prime example of how the Latino Academy of Workforce Development's Transportation Academy helps people create their own career pathways.

Partial funding for the Transportation Academy is provided via a federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) administered by Dane County's Housing Access and Affordability Division (HAA). The intent of CDBGs is to provide decent housing, suitable living environments and expanded economic opportunities — principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

Miriam came to the Latino Academy with the goal of improving her employment opportunities, enrolled in Class B Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training and received her license late in 2019. She also took computer and digital media classes at Latino Academy to increase her employability.



Miriam is ready to help keep our streets plowed

After receiving her Class B CDL, Miriam secured an internship with the Dane County Highway Department in August 2020. Months later, after becoming the first woman of color to complete the internship, she was hired as a permanent full-time employee.

"Miriam was one of our sharpest students," said Louis Rodriguez, her internship supervisor. "If I asked her to load salt into the

dumper, I knew she would not only do the job, she wouldn't spill a single grain of salt while doing it. She always gives 110%, and her precision is amazing."

When asked why she chose Latino Academy and what successfully completing the program meant to her, Miriam said, "Getting my CDL represented achievement — a goal I wanted to accomplish — and with Latino Academy, they went above and beyond to help me.

Latino Academy provides what I needed — not just a classroom, but it also helped me so much, for example by providing daycare for my child while I attended class."

Finally, and most importantly, Miriam said, "Getting my CDL was amazing. There are no boundaries for a woman such as myself. I was proud to go beyond even my own expectations."

Adult Protective Services uses collaborative approach to reach best outcomes

What started with a call to the Adult Protective Services (APS) Helpline expressing concerns about a husband neglecting his wife led to a much more complicated situation -- one that

Dane County
APS receives and
investigates about
450 reports of
potential elder
abuse annually.

illustrates how social workers work collaboratively to protect an older adult from financial exploitation.

APS supports and protects some of Dane County's most vulnerable citizens, including persons over 65 who are at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, self-neglect or financial exploitation or persons over 18 with a physical or mental condition that makes them vulnerable to these same kinds of abuse. Additionally, if there is concern that a person identified to be at risk is no longer capable of understanding their situation or the consequences of their

situation, APS staff may pursue the legal tool of guardianship to protect the individual.

In the case of the aforementioned neglect call, Elder Abuse Investigators discovered the real source of the abuse and eventually a judgment of more than \$400,000 was made against the son of the man about whom the original report was based. An Adult Guardianship Social Worker and a dedicated guardian worked with the victims to prevent any further abuse or self-neglect. The unprecedented outcome of this case could not have occurred without the role APS staff played

in advocating for the needs of the vulnerable individuals involved. While this family's story may be unique in the terms of the large judgment against a family member, it is an example of the type of work APS staff members do every day. Talking with community members concerned about an individual, following up on reports to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults and working with the legal system to protect an individual's right to self-determination is all in the day's work of APS staff. The work is often done without fanfare, but plays a key role in the community of Dane County.

Victim Advocate Project helps vulnerable adults recover from trauma

The Dane County Adult Protective Services Victim Advocate Project (VAP) provides advocacy and specialized services to victims of crime who are elders (age 60 and over) and to adult individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Funding is provided by the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Victims of Crime Act.

The project averages 400 referrals per year, the most common crimes against these groups being domestic violence, physical assaults, sexual assaults and financial crimes and exploitation. Advocates perform a wide array of specialized services, such as helping victims understand and exercise their legal rights, accessing victim compensation

and other resources, connecting with area services and safety planning. Advocates also provide significant emotional support so that victims might better understand the impact of trauma and how they might recover mentally, physically and financially.

VAP advocates preside over three monthly community meetings: Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Coordinated Community Response, Elder Abuse Coordinated Community Response and the Financial Abuse Specialist Team. Citizens, community service providers, and professionals come together to learn how to best support the safety and quality of life for

these individuals by reducing the incidence of abuse and exploitation.

COVID-19 has touched so many things in the lives of victims, from being part of a risk group to social isolation in one's home to the closure of

services to the inaccessibility of technology. However, there was no interruption to victim services and advocates continue to provide specialized services such as in-person assistance, court accompaniment, safety planning and emotional support to victims and their families.

The Victim Advocate Project averages 400 referrals per year.



Collaborative Stabilization Coalition supports adults living with dementia or other cognitive impairments

The Collaborative Stabilization Coalition (CSC) of Greater Dane County formed in 2019 using Innovation Grant funding awarded to Dane County by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. The CSC is a "collaborative coalition of Dane County leaders working to stabilize, educate and support adults living with dementia or other cognitive impairments in an effort to reduce their risk of crisis."

The CSC held a kickoff event in January 2020 to introduce its mission to the community with nearly 300 participants, including local Family Care, Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), IRIS Consulting Agencies (ICAs), law enforcement, residential and other home care providers.

Additionally, the event highlighted a professional development training series for caregivers of persons with dementia and intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) focused on best practice responses when these individuals experience a behavioral crisis. The training events began in February 2020 but stopped due to the coronavirus pandemic.

However, through creativity, flexibility and dedication the CSC pivoted to the creation of a virtual platform for both the dementia and I/DD training series, which began in late August 2020. The two series drew more than 500 participants across 16 sessions and 45 municipalities.

Training topics included:

- Trauma's Influence on the Brain, Body and Behavior
- Power and Control—Learning to Use it Respectfully
- Managing Threatening Confrontations
- Coping in a Crisis with Confidence
- Partnering with Law Enforcement

No less important than the training opportunities provided by the CSC are the relationships created through participation in the committee. These partnerships have proven invaluable when working to support vulnerable residents of Dane County facing behavioral crises through no fault of their own. It is the work of the CSC to help ensure our community knows how to best support these individuals to reduce emergency detentions and other institutional placements.



500 individuals completed dementia or disabilities training in 2020.

Birth to 3 Program helps get Mateo on his feet

A Down syndrome diagnosis meant Mateo would likely not learn to walk as early as most children, so he started with the Birth to 3 Program as an infant. When a parent or doctor detects a developmental difference or delay in an infant or toddler aged 0-36 months, Birth to 3 is there to help. Dane County contracts with Bridges for Families and UCP Connections to provide valuable services to children in Dane County.

With the goal of reaching their developmental milestones, a child's individualized plan of support can include access to a service coordinator, early education specialists, and physical, speech and occupational therapists. Whenever possible, service providers work with children in their home learning environment, which produces better outcomes compared to a clinical setting.

An Early Interventionist (EI) team supports each family, with one

member acting as the primary coach to parents and other primary caregivers. Mateo's service coordinator collaborated with his parents to have an occupational therapist visit Mateo twice monthly to help him develop the strength and coordination needed to learn to walk.

At 21 months old, Mateo was so close to taking his first steps! His occupational therapist helped him develop the core strength needed to sit up, then scoot, then crawl. Before long, he was standing without support and comfortably "cruising" around rooms while holding on to furniture. Even when he occasionally took a big tumble, he got right up and tried again! A speech therapist also joined the team to help Mateo expand his vocabulary.

"Even through the challenges of 2020 and the pandemic, Birth to 3 has helped us stay on track with Mateo's development goals," Mateo's parents shared.



Mateo is cruising!

Nearly 1,600 children receive Birth to 3 services annually.



"We highly recommend the services of Birth to 3 and Bridges for Families, and are thankful these services are available to us."

—Mateo's parents

Family and Community Engagement Program helps young families "in so many ways"

Andrea needed help when the mother of five enrolled in the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Program



Capri and son are all smiles thanks to FACE

in 2020, right around the time her youngest child turned 3 and was aging out of eligibility for services through Early Childhood programs.

Dane County Social worker Julie Swenson went right to work in delivering on FACE's mission: To provide intensive prevention/early intervention work with families with the goal of preventing the need for formal involvement with the child welfare system.

"Andrea initially identified support to help her meet her family's basic needs as a priority," Swenson said. "Over the past eight months, Andrea and I have had almost daily contact. In the face of adversity, she has shown herself to be adept at accessing needed resources in our community. Access to support from her

neighborhood Joining Forces for Families worker, The River and Badger Prairie Needs Network food pantries, the Dane County Diaper Bank, Community Action Coalition, and Tenant Resource Center to maintain housing stability and ensure her family had food and necessary self-care items during this year have been a focus during the (Coronavirus) pandemic."

"As basic needs are met, our attention turns toward looking at longer-term goals such as getting her GED and addressing education needs for her children, as well as health and mental health support."

FACE is closely knit and tied to our communities to help combat social isolation and promote parent and child wellbeing.

Goals are set, with families, around five tenets: helping kids understand and express feelings, parenting across different developmental stages, building connections within communities, inner strength and resiliency, and getting basic needs met.

"FACE has helped me in so many ways," program participant Capri Booker said. "If FACE couldn't help, they gave me places that could. I was never left high and dry, they do everything they can to help you."

23 families enrolled in the first full year of the FACE program operation

FoodShare Employment and Training Program puts young family on pathway to success

Amber came to the FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) Program when she was working a low-wage job and had several major stressors. A young parent, Amber was trying to maintain a stable home for her son. Early in her involvement with the program, she lost her housing, learned she was pregnant and sent her son to stay with relatives. Additionally, Amber was struggling to find a better paying job because of a criminal conviction.

Dane County's FSET Program works with several community organizations that have expertise assisting people facing employment challenges. Amber's employment goals made her a good match for FSET's Just Bakery program, which works primarily with individuals who have had contact with the justice system. Participants gain industry certifications and college credits in commercial baking and receive access to other services, such as peer mentoring, to help support

success and reduce recidivism. Amber was part of a "trauma-informed care" cohort designed with a more flexible class pace and mental health supports. She earned commercial certification in food safety, restaurant and business management, nutrition, and more while at Just Bakery, which combines coursework and kitchen experience.

Amber's baby was born in June and she was supported in caring for her child during those critical first months of life. Over the course of the year, Amber went from earning \$8.50 an hour to \$13 an hour, plus weekend shift pay. Taking college credits through Just Bakery fueled Amber's aspirations, making her realize she is capable of succeeding and motivating her to earn a college degree and further increase her earning potential.

The support Dane County provides Amber is critical in helping her get to a place of self-

sufficiency. She is able to access assistance paying for childcare while she works and FSET provides help with transportation expenses and work uniforms.

633 people secured employment through FSET, at an average wage of \$13.54 per hour.

Income support programs offered by Dane County Human Services and the State of Wisconsin provide Amber and her children food and housing security, mental health support and medical insurance. These basic services will phase out as Amber earns more money and can create her own safety net.



Amber is baking sweet success thanks to FSET

Behavioral Health Resource Center ready to help

The Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC) is a new program provided by the Dane County Department of Human Services in conjunction with multiple county and community partners. The voluntary service is designed to help any Dane County resident seek assistance and access behavioral health services, with no barriers due to insurance status, financial status, age, identity, ability or legal status.

BHRC services are person-centered and consumer driven, meaning the individual and family are the experts regarding their needs. The BHRC's mission is to connect people with the mental health and/or substance use care they need, address barriers to accessing care, and to serve people across their lifespans while respecting native languages and cultures.

The BHRC's goals are:

- To improve timely, equitable access to mental health and/or substance use care;
- To improve care coordination and pathways between care providers through warm handoffs across systems;
- To provide information, referral, supportive services, care navigation, and follow-up to those waiting to access other services, and;
- To promote a no-wrong-door approach to mental health and substance use services.

The BHRC opened its doors in November 2020 and served more than 100 community members during its early months, helping them connect to mental health and/or substance use services for themselves or someone they care about. Early trending reflects the need for people to have a place to call for themselves, and also a place for professionals and loved ones to consult about how to support a person in need of services.

The BHRC is working with Public Health Madison to develop and distribute marketing materials translated in multiple languages to further support community outreach. The BHRC continues to work closely with county and community partners to increase visibility and to ensure the services offered are reflective of the trends and needs of the community.

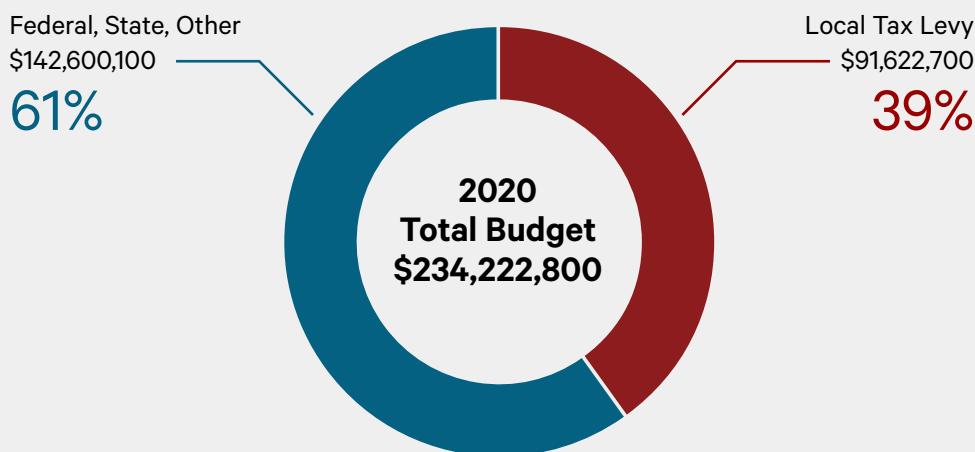


"Thank you for talking the other day. You were so helpful. I was feeling overwhelmed and you righted the boat."



2020 Budget Dane County Department of Human Services

In 2020, the Dane County Department of Human Services adopted budget totaled \$234,222,800; 61% (\$142,600,100) is financed by Federal, State and other outside sources and the remaining 39% (\$91,622,700) is supported by county tax levy funds.



Citations

[1] Hamer, E. (12.31.20) New Dane County Policy Eliminate Debt, Fees Related to Juvenile Justice System. Wisconsin State Journal. https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/new-dane-county-policy-eliminates-debt-fees-related-to-juvenile-justice-system/article_ab1fc4c1-9290-54d5-869f-36bcfb09e5b1.html

[2] State of Wisconsin, Department of Health Services. (October 16, 2020). Suspension of Health Care Coverage During Incarceration <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/dchaa/memos/20-24.pdf>

Key Phone Numbers

Dane County Department of Human Services

Aging and Disability Resource Center	855-417-6892
Area Agency on Aging	608-261-9930
Elder Abuse/Adults at Risk Hotline	608-261-9933
Badger Prairie Health Care Center	608-845-6601
Child Abuse reporting (business hours).....	608-261-5437
Child Abuse reporting (non-business hours)	608-255-6067
Foster Care Licensing	608-242-6333
Behavioral Health Resource Center	608-267-2244
Economic Assistance and Work Services	888-794-5556
Dane County Job Center	888-794-5556



www.danecountyhumanservices.org