



Dane County Department of Human Services

Director – Shawn Tessmann
1202 Northport Drive, Madison, WI 53704-2092
PHONE: (608) 242-6200 FAX: (608) 242-6293

Joe Parisi
DANE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

To: Dane County Executive Joe Parisi
From: DCDHS Director Shawn Tessmann ST
Re: DCDHS 2021 Budget Proposal
Date: August 28, 2020

Dane County Department of Human Services 2021 Request Budget Summary

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the 2021 Dane County Department of Human Services budget proposal.

2020 has been a year of unprecedented challenge and change for the department, to say nothing of the community at large. And while we genuinely mourn for all the hardships being experienced, we also hope to stay focused on fulfilling our mission. Now, more than ever, we seek to aspire to our new vision and mission for DCDHS:

VISION: *Empowered people thriving in safe, just, and caring communities.*

MISSION: *Provide access to effective, innovative, and evidence-based services and resources that support wellbeing, opportunities to thrive, safety, and justice to persons of all backgrounds.*

Before I elaborate on the work before us, I want to reflect on the accomplishments of department staff during this challenging time. In 2020, we have:

- Quickly and efficiently pivoted to being a critical cog in mitigating the impact of the coronavirus by keeping our vulnerable adults and people experiencing homelessness in safe shelters and/or safely at home.
- Kept the essential workers and residents living at Badger Prairie, our skilled nursing facility, virus free.
- Launched two divisions—Housing Access & Affordability and Prevention & Early Intervention—that are fully operational!
- Maintained momentum on plans to open the Behavioral Health Resource Center this Fall.
- Engaged in a full and comprehensive process to develop our new strategic plan with the benefit of the knowledge of our staff, providers, stakeholders, policymakers and our community.
- Placed more children with relatives as the Department increased its efforts to find and support kinship placements.

- Improved access to our critical benefit programs by improving timeliness in our Income Maintenance call center.
- Made incredible progress in our desire to become more trauma responsive as an organization.
- Made progress toward our quest for racial equity by asking more than 150 managers and supervisors to take part in a compulsory individual assessment of their cultural competency.
- Awarded contracts to five community centers to provide innovative and needed mental health services to our youth.
- Successfully launched several notable improvements in our crisis system, including data infrastructure to evaluate services and billing for crisis and new efforts to promote stability and data-sharing with Journey Mental Health Center.
- Published our first [annual report](#) in many years to improve our transparency to the community we serve.

The Department's 2021 budget request totals \$232,896,763. This breaks down into over \$147 million in outside revenue and \$85 million in county levy. The budget continues our tradition of fiscal caution while also benefitting from data driven decision making to budget available revenue. *I am proud to submit a proposal that maximizes revenue so as to keep our services stable in the community in 2021.*

Below are some of the major highlights of the proposal before you.

- This budget reflects our priorities by continuing the commitments to critical service areas of mental and behavioral health, services to the aging and disabled, programs that seek to end homelessness and investments in the safety and wellbeing of our kids. The proposal does not include any service disruptions of substance in these areas.
- Most provider agency contracts remain at their 2020 adopted level. Dozens of Purchase of Service (POS) agencies will even see small increases in 2021 should this proposal be adopted. The small number of POS provider cuts are related to grant revenue being lost, program closures, programs being brought in-house or Request-for-Proposal changes. These limited cuts to POS agencies equate to less than 1% of total contract lines.

The necessary GPR reduction for the department was largely achieved by budgeting new and otherwise available revenue, which is allowing an offset in county levy to achieve savings. We also achieved savings in operating costs by holding open a small number of staff vacancies, and by reducing unused allocations for printing and office supplies, staff travel and other administrative expenses.

The budget proposal also expands some critical services where necessary to continue to respond to the pandemic or new program needs, as follows:

- Nine positions are being added. Eight are funded with outside revenue and one is being funded through efficiency savings of bringing a housing case management contract in-house to augment housing stability for Joining Forces for Families (JFF) customers.
- \$45,000 has been added to expand our commitment to equity and diversity through targeted efforts and additional leadership development and staff training.
- An allocation of over \$140,000 will further improve our IT capacity and infrastructure.
- The demand for all meals for older adults increased by more than 61% in May 2020 compared to May 2019. This increase is expected to continue as long as congregate meal sites remain closed. This proposal funds this increase.
- The department intends to repurpose vacancies that occur through attrition to seek a new classification in Youth Justice to serve as a Leadworker—creating new avenues for career

pathways for our staff doing that critical work. This will be proposed through a separate resolution.

- Similarly, we also intend through separate resolution, to reclass a vacant Quality Assurance Specialist position to a Behavioral Health Manager. With the addition of the BHRC and with the community conversation around a Triage Center and/or a CAHOOTS model, we need more support in the oversight of our behavioral health programming.
- We are using savings from fewer institutional placements of older adults to fund a contract with a geriatrician (a physician specializing in geriatric medicine) to act as a consultant for those persons with Alzheimer's Disease or other related dementias.
- The Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) unit continues to expand. Through the end of July 2020 there were 1,421 participants in the program compared with 969 participants in July 2019—nearly a 50% increase in the last year. Revenue-supported positions are being added in the coming year to manage this growth.
- We are also planning for a state change to shift eligibility for Children's Long-Term Support to the local level by adding positions that will be supported by new state revenue claiming in this area.
- Outside revenue has increased in a number of areas, allowing programs to remain at current levels or to expand while saving county levy. Areas in which revenue has increased include: Adult Protective Services, Adult Guardianship, Crisis Services for Adults with Disabilities, and Birth to Three.

Beyond those changes, the 2021 budget proposal is largely status-quo from 2020. While we recognize there are areas of additional need, we understand that those priorities will be shaped in the weeks and months ahead based on community conversation. Families are facing great uncertainty, and we appreciate the opportunity to keep our services intact during a very difficult time.

Thank you for your leadership as we navigate these challenges together.