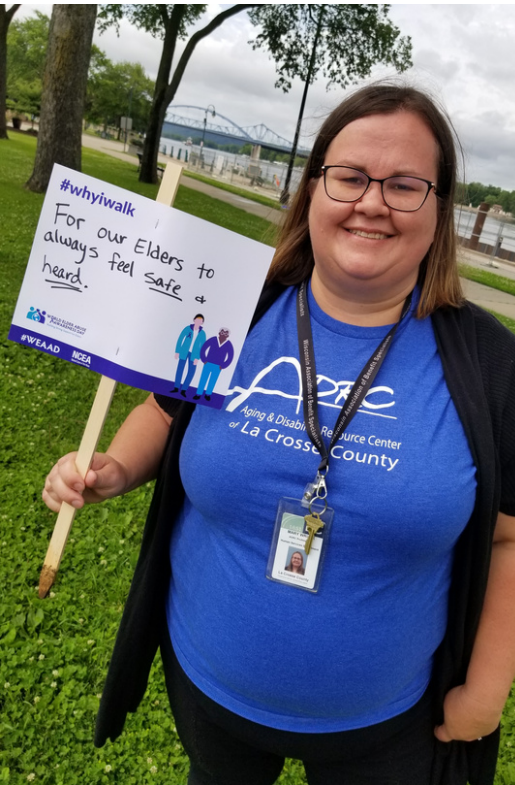


20 22

Impact Report

LA CROSSE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPT.



**Jason Witt, Human Services
Department Director**



LA CROSSE COUNTY

Supporting our Community

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



2022 saw the continued growth in the array and complexity of La Crosse County human services needs. Whether it was the increased need for dementia support services spurred by a growing older adult population, planning for the “unwinding” of enhanced pandemic-related economic support benefits, or the heartbreaking reality of families facing homelessness at the coldest time of the year, the community depended on County Human Services for support and partnership. The employees of the Human Service Department in 2022 again rose to the challenge by delivering enhanced resources, innovative approaches and personal connections.

To provide assistance to caregivers of older adults, two staff were designated as Caregiver Support Specialists in our Aging and Disability Resource Center. These positions provided information, support and resources to roughly 88 caregivers, helping them better care for themselves and their loved ones. To add a personal touch and increased access to economic support services, two Economic Support Specialists moved from office to community, spending time at various locations across the county. Harnessing the power of one-on-one relationships and the passion of those who have “been there”, peer support was enhanced across the spectrum of our behavioral health services. Justice Support Services continued its push to shift resources upstream by focusing on chronically school-absent youth. Partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and Casey Family Programs, La Crosse County Human Services joined a handful of counties who are developing unique approaches to address the housing insecurity of families within its child welfare system. The aim is to ensure that a lack of access to safe and stable housing is never a reason for child-removal or a barrier to reunification. Finally, responding to a community emergency where families encountering the threat of homelessness faced an uncertain winter, the Human Services Department took the lead in coordinating a community response.

Be it through new resources or novel ways of helping, always with an innovative and customer-service mindset, the Human Services Team will continue to rise to the challenge and work with our partners to meet La Crosse County’s human service needs!

Sincerely,

Jason Witt, Human Services Director

jwitt@lacrossecounty.org

2022 Overview

DEPARTMENT & EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHTS

- The Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) hosted its first annual **Elder Abuse Awareness Walk** and distributed yard signs to raise awareness of one of the most underreported public health crises—elder abuse. The ADRC's Adult Protective Services (APS) team received 301 reports of elder abuse in 2022, 21% more than 2021.
- The average monthly Food Share benefits issued in La Crosse County in 2022 was **\$2.7 million**.
- **12,037 rides** were provided by the Aging & Disability Resource Center's transportation program.
- In 2022, 18 children achieved permanency through **reunification with a parent**, 14 children through a guardianship, and 8 children through an adoption/termination of parental rights.
- The Integrated Support & Recovery Services (ISRS) Outpatient Clinic partnered with multiple agencies and businesses across the greater La Crosse community to increase access to **Fentanyl test strips**. To date 9,340 strips have been distributed. Additionally, we have partnered with Narcan Direct and will be placing four Naloxone boxes throughout our Human Services campus for trained staff to use in an emergency. Each box contains Narcan as well as rescue breathing masks and instructions for use.
- In 2022, the La Crosse Area Family Collaborative (L AFC) Neighborhood and Community Response Social Workers **served 204 families**. In total, 748 individuals were positively impacted: 292 adults and 456 children. Collectively, 2,717 needs were presented with 93% of them being met. The primary reasons families reached out to the L AFC include, housing concerns, transportation, mental health navigation, and child education needs.



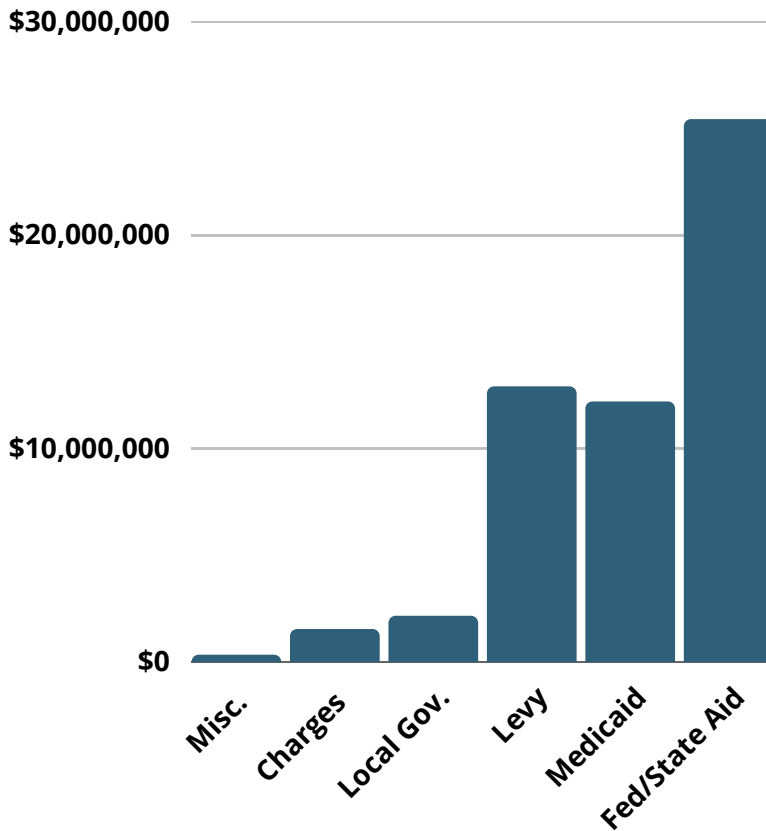
PROFILE: JOSEPH CLARKIN

Joseph Clarkin manages the senior nutrition site at the South Side Neighborhood Center for the ADRC and has worked for La Crosse County for about six years. The site distributes about 100 meals a day and will open in March as a new congregate meal site.

“What we do means a lot to people, it’s really important for nutrition, but also the human contact for the people we serve, many of whom live alone,” Joseph says. “Our clients really look forward to it, and it’s a chance for us to do a welfare check as well as serving a meal.”

2022 Finances

REVENUE & EXPENSES

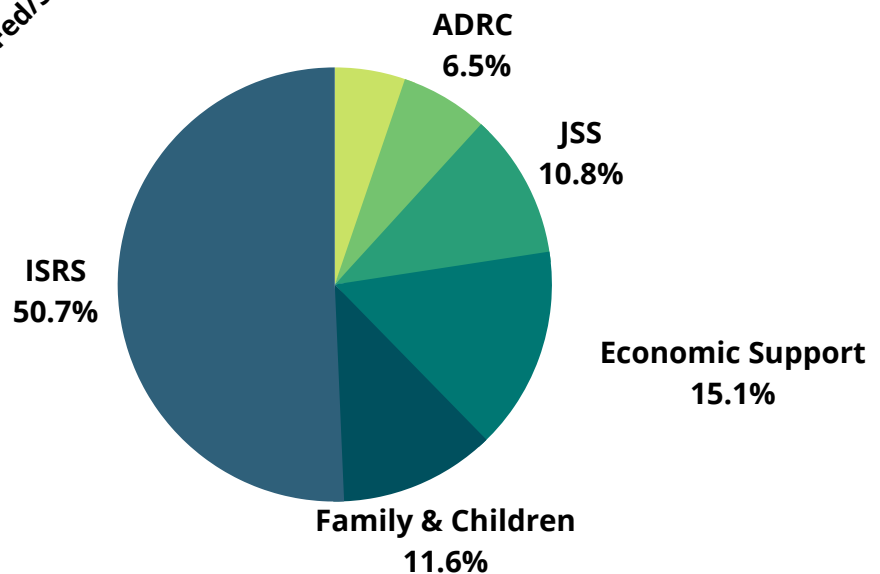


REVENUE

- Federal/State Aid: \$25,400,838
- Medicaid Revenue: \$12,171,738
- Levy: \$12,879,850
- Local Governmental Payments: \$2,132,146
- Public Charge for Services: \$1,511,855
- Miscellaneous Revenue: \$308,113
- **TOTAL: \$54,404,540**

EXPENSES

- HS Operations: \$2,794,914
- ADRC & Aging: \$3,486,821
- Justice Support Services: \$5,770,024
- Economic Support: \$8,063,732
- Family and Children: \$6,207,226
- Integrated Support and Recovery Services: \$27,055,183
- **TOTAL: \$53,377,900**



24,411

Individuals received Economic Support services in 2022

85,413

Senior Nutrition Program meals served in 2022 by the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

13,359

Crisis calls were processed by the mental health crisis team in 2022

Integrated Support Recovery Services



Christin Skolnik - Integrated Support and Recovery Services Manager

What we do: Integrated Support Recovery Services (ISRS) provides services for adult and children's mental health; adult and children's substance abuse; and children with special needs.

2022 Overview: In 2022, ISRS continued to expand service options for participants in all our program areas. Access to peer mentoring and peer support increased within four of our programs:

Comprehensive Community Services (CCS), Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS), Outpatient Clinic programs, and Crisis follow-up services. To continue meeting participants unique needs, we have added many new therapy services such as Accelerated Resolution

Therapy (ART) and Neuro Sequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT), as well as services including an all-inclusive childcare program, K-9 Assisted Skills Training, and Trauma Sensitive Yoga. We walked alongside 607 CCS participants and 527 CLTS participants, responded to 694 intake requests for service, served 1,005 within our Triage Clinic, responded to 13,359 crisis calls, and partnered with the La Crosse Police Department on 240 Co-Response interactions. In 2023, expect an expansion of community collaboration surrounding harm reduction and prevention as we continue to work alongside the La Crosse County Health Department and Alliance to Heal group to coordinate and offer resources to the region in the forms of fentanyl test strips, Narcan, mobile clinic resources and supports, access to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) within the jail and community. Additionally, we continue to seek out and add to our vendor network services that connect to what the emerging needs of the community are: harm reduction, prevention, trauma informed care, and innovative services.



Economic Support



Lorie Graff - Western Region Economic Assistance Manager

What we do: The Western Region for Economic Assistance (WREA) consortium helps residents apply for public assistance programs such as FoodShare, BadgerCare, WHEAP (heating assistance), and more.

2022 Overview: In 2022, WREA strengthened its community partnerships and continued to provide critical economic supports for low-income individuals and families. Two Economic Support Specialists began working in the community in July. Working on-site at various locations across the county, these staff have been able to meet in person with customers to answer questions, process applications, and resolve eligibility issues. In 2022, an average of 24,411 individuals

received Economic Support services in La Crosse County; there were a total of 23,008 La Crosse County residents enrolled in either BadgerCare Plus or Medicaid; a total of \$32.7 million in FoodShare benefits were issued within La Crosse County; and we provided monthly Wisconsin Shares payments to 188 families in La Crosse County, with a total of about \$1.8 million in benefits paid to help families with their childcare costs last year. Additionally, 3,983 households received Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) financial assistance in 2022. Looking ahead, the Consolidated Appropriations Act that was passed by Congress in late 2022 will have a significant impact on the FoodShare and Medicaid programs. FoodShare benefits that were increased and available during the pandemic will end in March, 2023. Medicaid eligibility reviews, which were waived since mid-2020 due to the pandemic, will resume in June 2023. WREA staff are working closely with community partners to provide support to individuals that will be impacted by these federal changes.



Justice Support Services



Tonya Van Tol - Justice Support Services Manager

What we do: Justice Support Services (JSS) supports, youth, families and adults at risk of being involved or involved in the criminal justice system. This includes early intervention/prevention programs, adolescent shelter/detention facilities, along with adult services that minimize the risk of becoming further involved in the criminal justice system.

2022 Overview: In 2022, Justice Support Services continued to strengthen prevention programming and engage with stakeholders to build strong partnerships. Youth Justice (YJ) caseloads remained on target as System of Care (SOC) cases increased. A significant reason

for this is chronic absenteeism cases being diverted from YJ to SOC. To meet the growing need to provide early interventions for youth, two new SOC Specialists were hired. The success rate of SOC discharges continues to be high with an average of 78% of youth successfully completing SOC in 2022. Adult justice intervention success includes 45 graduates from the Drug and OWI Treatment Courts last year. The Fresh Start project focusing on supporting people with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders concluded in the Fall of 2022. The evaluation of the program showed promising results with 50% of participants successfully meeting benchmarks.



Family and Children's Services



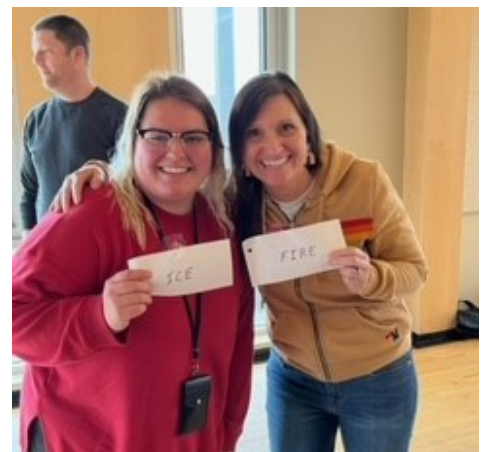
Tracy Puent -
Family and Children's
Manager

What we do: We provide Child Protective Services (CPS), Child Welfare Services, and run foster care, relative care and independent living for youth programs.

2022 Overview: In 2022, La Crosse County Family & Children's Section was identified as one of three counties in Wisconsin to participate in a pilot program. This pilot program, "Family Keys," is a partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the national organization, Casey Family Programs. Casey Family Programs is the nation's largest operating foundation focused on safely reducing the need for foster care in the United States. The

program aims to explore the intersection between child welfare and housing. The intent is to engage families involved in the child welfare system who are experiencing housing insecurity by eliminating barriers to safe and supportive housing. A La Crosse County team has worked to strengthen partnerships between community-based services and invest in upfront costs to support more children and families in their homes. By utilizing collaborative partnerships and shared resources, we hope to show that innovation in child welfare can minimize family trauma, prevent unnecessary removals, return youth to their families sooner, and offer cost savings to the broader community. The Family Keys team plans to secure three separate physical spaces for involved families to live, while also providing comprehensive family support aimed at stabilization, growth, and sustainability.

We received 1,244 reports of child abuse and requests for CPS services in 2022. We averaged approximately 80 children in out-of-home care each month. Of the children placed in out-of-home care in 2022, approximately 49% were in placement with relatives. The child welfare system in Wisconsin continues to transform the system to include more in-home safety planning with families as an alternative to removal and placement in out-of-home care. In 2022, we served 57 families or 106 children in their home through wraparound funding we received from the state. We hope to increase this number in 2023 as we continue to strive to keep all children safely with their family.



Aging and Disability Resource Center



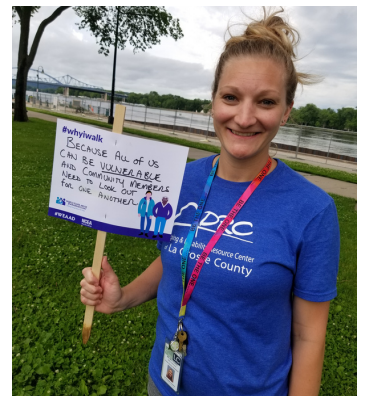
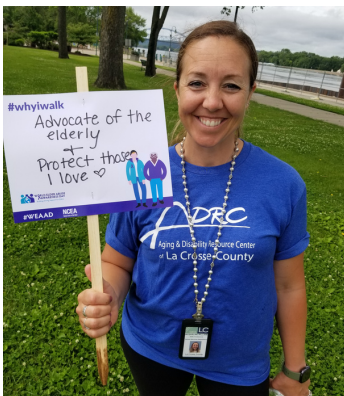
Carissa Pagel-Smith - Aging & Disability Resource Center Manager

What we do: We provide unbiased information related to aging or living with a disability. We also run nutrition, caregiver support, and other programs to help our community stay independent and healthy.

2022 Overview: In 2022, the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) increased its team of ADRC Professionals, otherwise known as Options Counselors, welcomed an Economic Support Specialist to the Section, as well as designated two staff as Caregiver Support Specialists—all to improve/expand services that support the growing population of older adults. Options Counselors assisted 5,488 customers who walked in and/or called the ADRC, and they

made/received more than 15,000 unique contacts, most of which were to provide information and assistance related to public benefits. The newly created position of the Caregiver Support Specialist supported roughly 88 caregivers. In addition to receiving case management throughout the year, caregiver needs were met through respite services, home repair/modifications, home security and safety services, consumable supplies, and assistive devices/technology. A total of 3,132 hours of respite were provided.

Enhancements to the ADRC's caregiver support also included revival of the La Crosse County Caregiver Coalition, creation of Caregiver Connection newsletter and Caring Better and Braver podcast, facilitation of Powerful Tools for Caregivers educational series and a support group for kinship caregivers, as well as several events such as a caregiver cruise, an intergenerational dementia awareness event, and documentary showings. Additional caregiver support, particularly for individuals and families impacted by dementia, was provided by the ADRC's Dementia Care Specialist. The Dementia Care Specialist supported more than 100 individuals/families, distributed 65 dementia crisis kits, collaborated to initiate a 16-week grief therapy group, and facilitated four Dementia Live sessions administered to 100 community members. Additionally, the ADRC's Disability Benefit Specialist provided advice and assistance to 273 individuals with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 59 and the Elder Benefit Specialist, 778 individuals ages 60 and older. Collectively, these benefit specialists helped clients obtain/preserve nearly \$3 million!



Looking Forward

PROJECTS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

2023 provides the opportunity to expand promising approaches while working strategically to position the Department for success in the years to come. Rapid growth in both community human services needs as well as the resources to meet them necessitate we re-examine how we serve the community. Collaboration, flexibility, integration, and continued innovation will be vital if we are to maximize our resources to deliver the results our community expects, all while putting the "human" back into human services.

- The Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) will work towards achieving its desired model for all **Senior Nutrition Program** dining sites where eligible individuals feel free to attend and furthermore, are located within a facility that is safe, comfortable, clean and has a cheerful, friendly atmosphere that promotes socialization and offers health promotion activities.
- The **Western Region for Economic Assistance** (WREA) will be working closely with community partners to assist individuals that will be impacted by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, passed by Congress in late 2022. Providing clear communication and support for individuals and families impacted by federal changes to their Food Share and Medicaid/BadgerCare Plus will be a top priority for the consortium.
- Four Social Service Specialist positions will be added to the **Family & Children's Section** to expand our capacity to provide supportive services to families such as supervised visitation, transportation, assistance with housing and employment needs, and parent education.
- The collaborative **Crisis Co-Response program** created by the Integrated Support & Recovery Services (ISRS) Crisis Unit and City of La Crosse Police Department in 2021 will be expanding both in service hours and staff! A crisis trained Social Worker along with three Mental Health Crisis Specialists will continue to partner with Law Enforcement Officers to respond to crisis calls in our community.
- **La Crosse Area Family Collaborative** is adding its fourth neighborhood-based location. A new neighborhood social worker will be embedded in the Schuh-Mullen community starting in 2023. There are a total of 140 households within the Schuh-Mullen neighborhood and the addition of this social worker will expand impact on the Northside of La Crosse.

Questions or Comments?



lacrossecounty.org/humanservices



608-784-4357 (help)

Goals and Oversight

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

Mission: Enhancing Self-Sufficiency and Quality of Life with Respect for the Dignity of the Person Served.

Organizational Vision: One Department One Mission One Culture

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tina Tryggestad, Chair
Kim Cable
Maureen Freedland
Mike Baroni
Dillon Mader

Pelli Lee
Dr. Laurie Logan
Sharon Hampson
Beth Clements



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