

Community Links

January 2021



“To provide quality services in a cost-effective manner through innovation, leadership, and the cooperation of dedicated people.”

COVID-19 Vaccine Information on County Website

Washington County now has a [COVID-19 Vaccination Information web page](#) that talks about our plans.

New Children's Respite Home Opening

The Greystone home is in Cottage Grove. It is a 4 bedroom child foster care site with one staff per two children during the day and an awake overnight staff. We have designed this program to provide enriching respite care for children 9-18 years of age. Services are geared toward children's interests, and what

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WCCS Corner

I hope everyone had a healthy and joyous holiday season. The New Year is upon us and I am sure we are all hoping for things to return to normal soon. The year 2021 brings about a lot of changes to our disability waiver programs along with temporary changes made to our programs during the current Peacetime Emergency.

Washington County staff continue to work from home and are not conducting in person visits. The county offices are open for public facing services. The county's employment centers continue to provide limited services. It is hopeful that with the distribution of the vaccine underway services and programs will be able to begin providing supports to folks soon.

The following temporary modifications have been approved by DHS:

1. Temporary 8.4% increase for PCA services and CDCS/CSG budgets during COVID-19.

Recent legislation in Minnesota allows for a temporary 8.4% increase for direct support services to respond to COVID-19. DHS temporarily will increase rates/budgets for services provided to people who access service through:

- Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS)
- Consumer Support Grant (CSG)
- Personal Care Assistance (PCA)

DHS received federal approval for this temporary increase for rates/budgets. The start date is December 1, 2020. It will expire on February 7, 2021.

With the additional funds, the person/provider agency must:

- Use at least 80% of the additional revenue to increase wages, salaries, and benefits for direct support workers and any corresponding increase in the employer's share of FICA taxes, Medicare taxes, state/federal unemployment taxes, and workers' compensation premiums.
- Use the remainder of the additional revenue, if any, for activities and items necessary to support compliance with Centers for Disease Control

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is important to them, with opportunities to explore and try new activities. Our goal is to develop ongoing relationships with children and their families so that the respite stay is something to look forward to for the child and family.

Respite visits run from 3 p.m. Sunday to 10 a.m. Wednesday, or 3 p.m. Wednesday to 10 a.m. Sunday. Respite services are typically covered under the waiver, or the service can be paid for under CDCS or private pay. Interested families can contact Heidi Mangan via [email](#) or call 651-278-4645.

DHS Adds ILS Therapies to CAC, CADI, and DD Waivers

Independent Living Skills (ILS) therapies include art, music, or recreational therapies with specific therapeutic goals and outcomes. The provider must have a background check and be enrolled as a medical assistance provider.

Valley Friendship Club

Check out Valley Friendship Club. We have moved our events online and have plenty of fun for all.

Some special events we have coming up are:

- Beach Party: (Zoom)
Sat., January 23
- Valentine's Day Party: (Zoom)
Sat., February 13

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and Prevention (CDC) guidance on sanitation and personal protective equipment.

2. Modifying requirements to support family caregivers and distance learning.
 - The first modification lifts the 40-hour per week limit for eligible workers in home care nursing (HCN), consumer directed community supports (CDCS), and the Consumer Support Grant (CSG).
 - The second modification allows students to use Individualized Education Program (IEP) personal care assistance (PCA) services for health-related supports, as identified in their individual education plans (IEPs) or individualized family service plans (IFSPs), in their home to support their access to education and distance learning.

BOTH THESE MODIFICATIONS ARE STILL WAITING ON FEDERAL APPROVAL.

3. Temporary allowance for parents, stepparents, spouses, and legal guardians of minors to provide personal care assistance (PCA) services to family members during the COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency.
 - Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) will temporarily waive the restriction on allowing certain family members to provide and receive payment for personal care assistance services to MHCP-enrolled PCA members. This waiver is intended to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by reducing the need for additional PCA providers to enter the home to provide PCA services during the pandemic.
 - **The anticipated dates for this allowance are December 1, 2020 - February 7, 2021.**

If you have any questions regarding the above modifications, please contact your case manager or fiscal management provider.

Your Rights during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how people with disabilities live their lives, access community, and stay connected with friends and family. These changes can be hard to understand or get used to. Even though it can be scary to experience these changes so quickly, there are things you can do to make it less scary and to protect yourself and others. This overview will help you understand changes to home and community-based services and your rights during the pandemic.

Important term

We use the term "home and community-based services (HCBS)" when talking about the options people with disabilities have in Minnesota to support them as they live an independent life. These are services that you can get if you have a disability waiver (Brain Injury [BI], Community Alternative Care [CAC], Community Access for Disability Inclusion [CADI], or Developmental Disability [DD]) or a homecare service, such as personal care assistance (PCA) services. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) creates rules for how providers can deliver these services. One set of rules is Minnesota Statute 245D.

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- St. Patrick's Day Party: (Zoom)
Wed., March 17

We also have other exciting Zoom events every day of the week. Visit our [website](#) to see our full calendar.



Hooked on Fishing!

Learn how to set up a rod, put bait on the hook, cast like a pro, take fish off the hook, and learn about different kinds of fish and different ways to catch them! Bait / flies, tackle, and fishing rods will all be provided.

Valid Minnesota fishing license required for ages 16+.

Program is FREE and reservations are required!

Family Ice Fishing at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park

Learn how to use special ice fishing equipment, find the fish under the ice, and proper ice fishing techniques! Bait, lures, and poles will all be provided. Capacity is 15 people.

Age range: 8-15
FREE (vehicle permit required), registration is required.

**Sat., February 6
1-3 p.m.**

Meet at the Fishing Pier
Visit our [website](#) to register.
(Reservations will open January 11 based on the Governor's orders.)

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Some providers have to get a license from the state to provide services. They have to follow all the rules in Minnesota Statute 245D. When an answer below talks about licensed services, we will call that out. Otherwise, you can assume the answer applies to all services, not just ones that require a licensed provider.

- [I am a person who receives services or who helps a person who receives services. What information is available about COVID-19?](#)

The pandemic and my services

- [What is DHS doing to make sure that I can access HCBS and so other people can too?](#)
- [What might look different during the peacetime emergency?](#)

Access to services

- [Do I have the right to go back to my day services?](#)
- [Do I have the right to go back to my employment services or job?](#)
- [Do I have to go back to my day services, employment services or job, once they are open and available?](#)
- [Who gets to decide if I can go back to use services?](#)

Health and safety

- [What can I do to stay safe?](#)
 - [Can my day service or employment service provider take my temperature or ask me questions before letting me get services?](#)
- [Can my service provider make me wear a mask?](#)
- [Can I make my staff wear a mask?](#)
- [If I get COVID-19, does my service provider have to tell the other people in my day program, home, or job?](#)

Rights in a residential program

- [Can I leave my house if I want to? Can my provider physically stop me from leaving? If someone I live with gets COVID-19, can my provider make me stay in my bedroom?](#)
- [What if I live in a group home and I'm feeling sick or I've been exposed to the coronavirus?](#)

The right to see friends and family

- [Can I have my family or friends visit me?](#)
- [Do I have the right to go visit my family?](#)
- [If I go visit my family, can my provider refuse to let me come back to my house?](#)

Service termination

- [Can my provider drop me from services during the peacetime emergency if they are still open for business and serving other people?](#)

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Washington County CDCS Training

This will be a virtual training. All sessions are the same so only one session needs to be attended. Sessions are facilitated by two Community Services staff. If you are interested in attending, please contact your social worker to receive the training packet and email invite.

All trainings are 6-8 p.m.:

- **Tues., February 16**
- **Thurs., May 20**
- **Tues., August 17**
- **Thurs., November 18**

Free Student Meals are Available from Each School District

District 622

Free meal pick up locations and times:

- **Carver:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **Castle:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **Cowern:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **Eagle Point:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **Johnson Glenn:** *No pick up due to construction.*
- **Maplewood:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **North:** 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- **Oakdale:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **Richardson:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **Skyview:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **Tartan:** 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- **Weaver:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **Webster:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

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Protecting my rights

- [What can I do if I think my rights are being violated?](#)

Name of Organization	Description	Contact Information
Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (OMHDD)	<p>The OMHDD can help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns or complaints about services • Questions about rights • Grievances • Access to appropriate services • Ideas for making services better • Reviewing guardian actions • General questions or the need for information about services for people with mental or developmental disabilities, chemical dependence, or emotional disturbance. 	<p>Via email Send general questions to ombudsman.mhdd@state.mn.us.</p> <p>Regional ombudsmen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List by region • List by county <p>Phone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 651-757-1800 (metro area) • 800-657-3506 (toll free) • TTY/TDD - 711 (MN Relay brochure)
Office of Ombudsman for Families	<p>The Office of Ombudsman for Families is an independent state agency responsible for reviewing government and government regulated agencies. It ensures practices are fair, reasonable, and appropriate.</p> <p>There are four ombudspersons in their office working with four different communities of color. Each ombudsperson works independently from but in collaboration with each of the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minnesota Indian Affairs Council • Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs • Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage • Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans 	<p>Email obff.info@state.mn.us</p>

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Forest Lake Area School

Free school meal pickup has resumed at many of our school buildings; see date/time below. Details are available [online](#).

Starting **January 4 • 8-10 a.m.**

South Washington County Student Free Meal Program

South Washington County Schools (SoWashCo) families have the option to pick up school meals for their enrolled child. These meals are the same healthy and fresh food items that students typically receive at school and **free for all families**. *There is no sign-up required.* Please check the meal pick-up calendar daily as **schedules are subject to change**.

Meal Pick-up Calendar:

- [Meal Pick-up Calendar December 2020-January 2021](#)
- [Meal Pick-up Cooking Directions](#)

Stillwater Public Schools

Important information about 2020-2021 School Meals:

All students eat for free!

Whether your kids are still in school or moving into distance learning, they can still get free breakfast and lunch every day. Thanks to special federal funding, ALL KIDS under 18 years old eat free this year both at school and at home.

No paperwork. No financial requirements. We want all of our 8,300 students (and their younger siblings not yet in school) to get their free meals!

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Name of Organization	Description	Contact Information
Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care	Ombudsmen and volunteers work with people, their families, health care/service providers, and public agencies to ensure the health, safety, wellbeing, and rights of people who access long-term care.	Email MBA.OOLTC@state.mn.us Phone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 651-431-2555 (metro) • 800-657-3591 (toll free)
The Arc Minnesota	The Arc Minnesota advocates for the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Among the team of its advocates are staff that specifically support people from the Spanish-speaking, Hmong, and Somali communities.	Phone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 952-920-0855 (metro) • 833-450-1494 (toll free) Online Arc's Ask An Advocate form
Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM)	AuSM advocates for people and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder. It serves people throughout their lives with a focus on advocacy, education, support, collaboration, and community building.	Phone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 651-647-1083 (metro) Email info@ausm.org
Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC)	MDLC addresses the unique legal needs of people with disabilities across the state through free, civil legal assistance, regardless of age or income, on legal issues related to their disabilities.	Phone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 612-334-5970 (metro) • 800-292-4150 (toll free) Email Info@mylegalaid.org
National Alliance on Mental Illness-Minnesota (NAMI)	NAMI champions justice, dignity, and respect for all people affected by mental illnesses. It focuses on education, support, and advocacy to bring positive changes to the mental health system and increase the public/professional understanding of mental illnesses.	Phone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 651-645-2948 (metro) • 888-NAMI-Helps (888-626-4435, toll free) Email namihelps@namimn.org

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Pick the location and time most convenient for you and come get your free meals!

Please pick up only once per week. Download the [regular schedule](#).

- **Mondays:**
4:30-6 p.m.
 - Oak-Land Middle School
820 Manning Ave. N.
Lake Elmo
- **Tuesdays:**
4:30-6 p.m.
 - Stillwater Middle School
523 Marsh St. W.
Stillwater
- **Wednesdays:**
4:30-6 p.m.
 - Stillwater Area High School
5701 Stillwater Blvd. N.
Oak Park Heights
- **Thursdays:**
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 - Stillwater Middle School
523 Marsh St. W.
Stillwater
- **Fridays:**
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 - Brookview Elementary
11099 Brookview Road
Woodbury
 - Stillwater Area High School
5701 Stillwater Blvd. N.
Oak Park Heights

State Virtual Autism Conference

Registration is now open for the State Virtual Autism Conference

Wed., April 21-Sat., April 24
[Register online](#)

COVID-19 Community Resources

Financial Assistance for Renters

- Washington County has [assistance for renters](#) who have been affected by the pandemic.

Food Resources

- Need [assistance finding food support](#)? Contact Washington County's Food Support Line at 651-430-6688 Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- [Food Resource Guide](#)
- [Food Saving Tips](#): How to reduce food waste.
- [Free Meal Delivery Service / Emergency Food Pack Delivery](#)
- [Grocery Delivery Service](#): Washington County, local food shelves, and Transit Link are partnering to deliver FREE emergency food packs.
- [How to Prepare a 2-week Emergency Food Supply](#)
- [Hunger Solutions](#): Find a food shelf near you or call the Helpline at 1-888-711-1151.
- The Department of Human Services is offering online EBT availability to SNAP recipients. See [information on how to make online EBT purchases through Amazon and Walmart](#). *Participants cannot use cash assistance dollars – only SNAP for online purchasing.* Participants will need to pay for delivery fees and taxes, if applicable, with another payment source (credit card or debit card, PayPal).
- [Meals on Wheels](#): Meal delivery service for older adults.
- [Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors \(NAPS\)](#): Second Harvest Heartland provides a box of nutritious food each month to low-income seniors 60 years and older
- [SNAP Assistance](#): from Second Harvest Heartland. SNAP information and application assistance available over the telephone at 844-764-5513 or 651-209-7963.

General Resources

- [COVID-19 Valley Community Resources](#)
- [Resources in Washington County](#)

Mental Health Support

- Physical distancing and other measures aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19 are necessary, but can leave many feeling isolated, lonely, and anxious. It's important to find new ways to connect with family and friends during this time. [Find resources to support your mental health and well-being.](#)

Online VFC Hangout

Have you been missing your HUB friends?! Let's have a check in and hang out on Zoom! Come chat with your friends and hear all about the fun things they're doing at home lately!

Every Tuesday • 2:30 p.m.
Mark your calendar!

[RSVP online](#) for the date you want to attend. *Must RSVP via website.* Please enter a valid email address and you will be sent a link. Click the link, find a comfy place to sit, and chat with your friends!

Driving Assessments

The following agencies provide behind the wheel driving assessments and training for young adults and seniors:

- [Adaptive Experts](#)
- [Courage Kinney](#)

AuSM

AuSM offers year-round social skills classes for youth, teens, and adults with Autism. Check our [website](#) for more information.

How to receive additional issues of Community Links:

To subscribe or unsubscribe to The Community Links newsletter, go to [our website](#), click on the "Notify Me" tab on the left, enter your email address, and click on the envelope next to Community Links Newsletter.

Contact for article submissions:

Denise Steans
[Email](#) or call 651-430-4168

Waiver Reimagine 2021

In 2019, the Minnesota Legislature authorized the Department of Human Services (DHS) to make system-level improvements to Minnesota's disability waiver programs. Waiver Reimagine is intended to address the challenges people and families have raised.

- People feel like there is a lack of information.
- There is limited flexibility, control, and choice over services.

Waiver Reimagine is meant to respond to these concerns by:

- Making the waiver system easier for you to understand and use
- Empowering you with more control over your services
- Providing equity across waiver programs and people

Starting January 1, 2021, a person who receives a service affected by the changes will receive the new service during a *service change or at their annual reassessment* effective on or after January 1, 2021.

Waiver Reimagine will simplify the waiver service menu. The improvements will give you more options, control, and flexibility to choose your services and supports. This will:

- Make waiver programs easier to understand, while ensuring you still get the supports you need
- Help you more easily say what is important to you and for you
- Make it simpler to match the right services to your needs

These changes will create the foundation for additional changes that will occur over the next few years. The overall vision for a future waiver system includes waiver reconfiguration (moving from four waivers to two waivers) and individual budgeting.

- The name of the service you are receiving may change, but it will not change the staff wages or level of services you are getting currently.
- Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS) is NOT part of this change.

For more information, see the [DHS website](#). You can also view the [Waiver Reimagine Introduction video](#) online.

Simplifying the service menu	
Existing configuration	Simplified service
Corporate foster care SLS corporate	Community residential services
Family foster care SLS family	Family residential services
Personal support Adult companion	Individualized home supports (without training)
Independent living skills, training Individualized home supports Supported living services (15 min unit)	Individualized home supports (with training)
In-home family supports	Individualized home supports (with family training)
Day training & habilitation Structured day program	Day support services