

CDCS Corner (Consumer-Directed Community Supports)

There have been a lot of changes passed at the state level – but they still need federal approval prior to implementation. The following changes are waiting approval:

- Minimum wage increase for staffing support to \$19 per hour effective January 1, 2024.
- Paid Parent of Minor (PPOM) or spouse increase in allowable weekly hours to 80 for two parent family and 60 for single parent family/spouse.

Reminder: All staff will no longer have the option of opting out of PTO effective January 1, 2024.

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Community Services
14949 62nd Street N.
Stillwater, MN 55082

[Intellectual and
Developmental Website](#)

DHS Eliminates Parental Fees for Children Receiving MA (Medical Assistance) under the TEFRA (Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act) Option and HCBS (Home and Community- Based Services) Waivers

A new Minnesota law has eliminated parental fees for parents whose children are: enrolled in Medical Assistance (MA); under the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) option; or whose children are accessing Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) through a waiver program, effective July 1, 2023. HCBS disability waivers include:

- Brain Injury (BI)
- Community Alternative Care (CAC)
- Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI)
- Developmental Disabilities (DD)

Before the new law, some parents of children with a disability enrolled in MA under the TEFRA option or receiving HCBS were subject to a monthly fee, known as a parental fee. The parental fee is a cost-sharing mechanism that applies when only the child's income is considered in determining MA eligibility under the TEFRA option and for children receiving HCBS.

Parental fees may still be assessed for children placed in a regional treatment center when MA pays the cost of care and children in 24-hour out-of-home placement. *Any parental fees that incurred prior to July 1, 2023 will continue to be assessed.* If you have questions regarding this, please call the state Parental Fee Unit at 651-431-3806 or 1-800-657-3751.

Legislative update:

Paid parent of a minor or paid spouse through the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) program is set to end November 11, 2023. At this time there is no talk of an extension. Please begin discussions with your social worker to explore alternative options that will meet your needs.

Written by: Denise Steans, senior intellectual and developmental disabilities worker
Information from: Department of Human Services Aging and Disability

ARC Microgrants are Back!

You may be eligible for a microgrant if you are an individual with a certified disability living in Minnesota. The microgrant program is made possible through funding from the Minnesota Department of Human Services and The Principal Foundation to assist individuals with projects/goals related to housing or employment. **Applications will be accepted from individuals or from their staff, family, friends, or supporters. Only one microgrant per year may be awarded to an individual.**

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CDCS Corner on page 1*

*Includes paid parents of
minors and spouses.*

Reminders for
participants of CDCS:

- Staffing cannot be billed:
 - while the recipient is in the hospital, or
 - when the person and/or support staff are out of the country.
- Support staff is a 1:1 awake service.
 - Staff cannot be paid while sleeping.
 - If you are scheduled to provide support overnights, *the support staff must be awake at all times.*
- No changes are allowed on the CDCS plan within the last 30 days of the plan.
- You must maintain your medical assistance (MA) to remain on this program.
- All items/services must be approved on your plan or approved with a revision before purchasing.
- Overtime (OT) for staff is not allowed at this time without

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Because of the popularity of the program, The ARC will only be able to accept 25 applications per month. If the portal shuts down before you are able to submit your application, please try again at the beginning of the following month when the portal reopens.

To apply, call 952-920-0855 or visit [The ARC's Minnesota Microgrant Partnership web page.](#)

Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS): Caretaker Information with Licenses Gives Peace of Mind, Thanks to Young Minnesotan

When you're responsible for someone's care, it can be scary to leave them alone, even for a short time. A new law passed by the Minnesota Legislature will take one anxiety off your shoulders, thanks to the work of a now-14-year-old Minnesotan.

Makena Prevost — a Girl Scout in Troop 18378 out of Orono, Minnesota — needed a community service project to earn her Silver Award from the Girl Scouts of America. She decided to explore the idea of including caregiver information in certain Minnesota driver's license records to let first responders at a crash scene know a person in the vehicle has someone dependent on them who might need extra care.

Makena wanted to make sure her siblings would be remembered if something happened to her parents. While some people with disabilities can be left home with a babysitter or alone for a short time, they have time-sensitive needs. If her parents got into a crash, someone would need to check on the rest of her family.

Not only that, Makena said, "I have family members who have mental disabilities, and, if they were on their own, talking to a police officer, that might be a little intimidating. It could be hard for them to process and tell the officer what happened."

The caregiver information included in a license record was her solution. Makena and her mom, ShawnMarie Prevost, took the proposal to Sgt. Pete Ekenberg of the Corcoran Police Department, who loved the idea. He put her in touch with Bill Hammes with our Office of Traffic Safety who coordinated with our Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) division and legislators to make it happen.

The benefits were immediately recognized by DVS leaders. In the event of a crash, law enforcement officers will know that there is someone at home who is dependent on the caretaker. This means that the authorities can quickly respond to the situation and ensure that the dependent individual is not left unattended. Not only does it offer the reassurance that their loved one will be taken care of if the worst happens, but it also relieves anxiety and stress at the thought of leaving their loved one alone.

"The caretaker law is a simple but powerful tool that ensures the safety and well-being of vulnerable individuals in our community," DVS Program Director Jody-Kay Peterson said. "By providing this information in your DVS record, caretakers can have peace of mind knowing that their loved ones will be taken care of in the event of an emergency."

The law was passed by the Legislature last spring and went into effect August 1.

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prior authorization from your case manager. *OT will only be approved in the event of health and safety.*

- PPOM/spouse are still limited to 40 hours per week. This may change if/when the department of human services receives federal approval.

Training:

The CDCS training sessions will be held on a **virtual/online** platform. *All sessions are the same so only one session needs to be attended.* Sessions are facilitated by Community Services' staff.

If you are interested in attending, contact your social worker. You'll be mailed a training packet and emailed a training link.

CDCS training sessions:

6-8 p.m. on:

- **Tuesday, November 14**

Family Support Grant Update

With the final quarter of 2023 upon us,

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"It's helpful for so many people as it is, but it's going to help so many more," ShawnMarie said.

Fill out the [Autism Spectrum-Mental Health Emergency-Caretaker Contacts Form](#) from the [Forms-Documents/Driver's License Forms section of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety website](#); *it must initially be submitted in person to your local driver's license office.* If you already have caretaker contacts on file, you can update these contacts by submitting an online request through the [Forms Submissions/Upload Miscellaneous Forms/Miscellaneous/Update Caretaker Contacts page of the DVS website](#).

[From article on the Department of Public Safety Blog.](#)

Classes

• **Arts-based Self-Advocacy**

Upstream Arts is proud to offer Minnesota's first arts based self-advocacy classes for adults with disabilities.

Join Upstream Arts' growing community of self-advocates expanding voices and choices through the arts. The self-advocacy classes offer a fun, creative, and experiential learning environment for participants to strengthen self-advocacy skills with and alongside Upstream artists and peers. Upstream Arts uses the arts to explore topics related to informed choice and person-centered planning, integrating theatre, dance, visual arts, poetry, and music into the weekly classes.

Now enrolling: Offering classes online and in-person. Classes start in October.

For more information, visit the [Upstream Arts website](#).

• **Cow Tipping Press**

Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Cow Tipping Press teaches and publishes writing by people with intellectual/developmental disabilities, giving audiences a new way to think about this rich and wildly underrepresented form of human diversity.

Do you—or people you represent—have a developmental disability and use words to communicate? Consider partnering with Cow Tipping Press for literary writing classes that empower adult students, develop support staff, and share the distinct personalities and assets of people with developmental disabilities for local and national audiences.

Packages: Cow Tipping Press runs three semesters of programming yearly: in the fall (October/November), spring (February/March), and summer (June/July). These include both a limited number of open enrollment classes for individuals as well as opportunities for scaled partnership at the organizational level. Classes are held in a variety of community locations in the Twin Cities. Our full-fledged package includes staff training, five two-hour classes, and the publication and celebration of a customized book.

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we would like to remind everyone:

- Turn in your 2023 receipts before the end of the year.
 - *Applications for an individual's 2024 Family Support Grant (FSG) will not be accepted if 2023 receipts have not been received.*
 - If you are unsure of your receipt status, please contact your case manager for an update.

2024 FSG Application Update:

- 2024 FSG applications will be sent by postal mail the first week of October.
 - *Watch your mailbox for your application/program information.*
 - If you have had an address change this year, please remember to update your information with your case manager.

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Methods: Cow Tipping teachers use differentiated instruction methods to cater to diverse learners. Sometimes that means exploring new topics and genres. Sometimes it's transcribing students' speech. And sometimes it's simply creating space for their fresh inventive voices. For nearly all students, it's the first time they've published writing. A number have gone on to read their work in galas, classrooms, and arts and advocacy events. 100% say they are proud of the work they create.

For more information including how to sign up for fall classes, visit the [Cow Tipping Press website](#).

Feeling a Financial Crunch? Check Out These Assistance Programs

- **Affordable Connectivity Program**

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) benefit program that helps ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare, and more. View some details below:

- The benefit provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.
- Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute \$11-\$49 toward the purchase price.
- The Affordable Connectivity Program is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount per household.

For more information about eligibility and how to apply, visit the [FCC website](#).

- **Energy Assistance Program (EAP)**

- EAP helps pay home heating costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified households.
- This is federally funded and administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, which works with local service providers throughout the state.
- Grants are available for renters or homeowners and for households with incomes at or below 50% of the state median income (based on household size, income, type of fuel, and energy usage).
- Services may include: payment of energy bills; help with utility disconnections or necessary fuel deliveries; education on efficient and safe use of home heating energy; advocacy with energy suppliers and human service providers (on behalf of consumers); and repair or replacement of homeowners' malfunctioning heating systems.

Applications for the winter of 2023-2024 are available with a deadline to apply of May 31, 2024.

To apply for assistance and see eligibility guidelines, visit the [Minnesota EA website](#) or call 1-800-657-3710 to have your local EAP provider send an application.

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- Applications are also available on the [Washington County Family Support Grant website](#).

Contact your case manager if you have questions.

Written by: Shelly Wold, family service worker

Halloween Fun

Valleyfair Tricks and Treats Halloween Event

Valleyfair is bringing back the family-friendly Tricks and Treats Halloween event. Valleyfair describes this as an “all fun and no fright” event. It will include a trick-or-treat trail, Halloween-themed games and activities, a scavenger hunt, specialty treats, drinks, and original shows.

Every Saturday and Sunday through October 29 | 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Event is included with park admission.

For more information, visit the [Valleyfair Tricks and Treats website](#).

Self-Direction Connection Conference

Connect - Grow - Learn

A first of its kind conference in Minnesota to learn about the latest trends and practices in Consumer-Directed Community Supports (CDCS) and Consumer Support Grant (CSG). Meet other people using CDCS and CSG for their own life. Conference audience includes self-advocates, families, caregivers, case managers, and support planners.

Friday, October 27 | 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Mayo Health Systems Event Center, Mankato

\$40 | Scholarships are available. | People using CDCS and CSG can speak to their support planner/case manager to use their budget for trainings.

To learn more or to register, visit the [Harry Meyering Center’s Self-Direction Connection Conference web page](#) or call 507-387-8281.

Reduced Price Social & Recreational Opportunities

- **Federal Access Pass:** Free, lifetime pass available to U.S. citizens or permanent U.S. residents who have been medically determined to have a permanent disability. Pass provides access to more than 2,000 recreation sites. At many sites, the Access Pass owner may receive discounts on expanded amenity fees such as camping, swimming, boat launching, and guided tours.
For more information, visit the [Access Pass website](#).
- **Guthrie Theater:** Guthrie Gateway Tickets allow patrons with limited income the opportunity to attend Guthrie performances for just \$5 per ticket. *To qualify, you must be at least 18 years of age and enrolled in one or more of the following programs: General Assistance (GA); Medical Assistance (MA); Minnesota Care; Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP); Section 8; Social Security Disability; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); or free/reduced price school meals.* Proof of enrollment in one program and photo ID are required. Apply in person at the box office. Once enrolled, tickets may be purchased over the phone. Enrollment is valid for one year and can be renewed.
For more information, visit the [Guthrie Theater website](#).
- **Minnesota Children’s Museum:** If your family can’t afford to visit, you may qualify for discounted admission through the museum’s All Play program. *Any family receiving benefits through Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), or free/reduced school lunch programs is eligible for discounted admission through the All Play program.*
For more information, visit the [Minnesota Children’s Museum website](#).
- **Science Museum of Minnesota:** Reduced ticket cost and reduced yearly membership cost. *To qualify, you must be at least 18 years of age and enrolled in one or more of the following programs: General Assistance (GA); Medical Assistance (MA); Minnesota Care; Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP); Section 8; Social Security*

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Valley Friendship Club (VFC) Activities

Events are happening every week at VFC! Check out the [online activities calendar](#). There are activities based on ages and groups: Kids-Connect, TeenUp, and All Member/Family. Complete an [online membership form](#) and register for events.

For more information, visit the [VFC website](#).

Contact Us for Article Submissions:

For questions or to submit articles, contact:

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

Sign Up for this Newsletter

Sign up to receive this newsletter via email or text through our [Notify Me system web page](#).

If you have a change to your email address, make sure to update the Notify Me system so you continue receiving your newsletters.

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Disability; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); or free/reduced price school meals. You will be required to show proof of enrollment with photo ID.

For more information, visit the [Science Museum of Minnesota website](#).

- **Walker Art Museum:** Get inspired for free.
 - **Free Thursday Nights:** Free gallery admission. *Tickets are timed so claim your ticket and entry time.*
Every Thursday night | 5-9 p.m.
 - **Free First Saturdays:** Free gallery admission, make art, and get creative with your family.
First Saturday of each month

For more information, visit the [Walker Art Museum website](#).

Fun Washington County Winter Activities

Outdoor:

- **Cross Country Skiing:** Washington County grooms ski trails when conditions allow at [Big Marine Park Reserve](#), [Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park](#), [Lake Elmo Park Reserve](#), [Pine Point Regional Park](#), and [St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park](#). Skiers must purchase a Washington County ski pass [online](#), at a pay station, or at a park office. \$6 daily | \$30 annual. *Youth, ages 18 and younger, are free.*
- **Skating Rinks:** [Cottage Grove](#) and [Woodbury](#).
- **Sledding hills at Minnesota State Parks**
- **Snowshoeing:** MSR branded snowshoes are available for rent at [Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park](#), [Lake Elmo Park Reserve](#), and [St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park](#). Available on a first come/first serve basis during regular office hours. *Snowshoers must remain on designated multi-use trails.* Ski passes are not required for snowshoers. Fees: Adults - \$10 (3 hours) | Youth - \$5 (3 hours) | Late fee - \$10.

Indoor:

- **[26th Annual Alternative Gift Market](#)**
Instead of buying yet another tie or trinket for someone, shop for gifts that are produced and distributed using fair trade practices, sustainably grown where applicable, and provide for people's basic needs of food, shelter, and medical care.
- **[Bowling with Special Olympics](#)**
 - [Special Olympic Area 13 Teams](#)
- **[Indoor Fun in Minnesota this Winter](#)**

Miscellaneous:

- [Stillwater Events Calendar](#)
- [Washington County Programs and Events](#)
- [Washington County Recreational Activities](#)