

The STAR Newsletter

Adult Foster Care (AFC) Issue

A newsletter for licensed adult foster care providers of Washington County

Summer 2024



New Providers!

February 2024

- **Zemzem Tena**
Cottage Grove

March 2024

- **Worku Bedanie & Seble Woldermariam**
Woodbury

Reminder

Notify your licensor with changes to your email address and home/cell phone numbers.

Adult Foster Care Licensing Team's Mission

To enrich the lives of adults by promoting safe and quality licensed care.



Community Services
Adult Foster Care
Licensing
14949 62nd Street N.
Stillwater, MN 55082
[Adult Foster Care Licensing Website](#)

Foster Care Recognition Evening



On May 15, the Washington County Community Services Licensing Unit hosted a Foster Care Recognition Evening at the Lake Elmo Event Center. This was the first recognition event since

2019. While the pandemic made it difficult to plan social gatherings, it was clear this year that providers wanted to connect and socialize! Since April 2023, Washington County has licensed a total of 33 new adult and child providers. The celebratory event was attended by 44 adult foster care providers, 10 child foster care providers, as well as 27 Washington County employees.

Lake Elmo Inn provided delicious hors d'oeuvres and desserts. Rose Floral donated beautiful floral arrangements that some providers took home as a token of appreciation. Providers also received custom Washington County totes and blankets.

The evening was filled with speeches from Sarah Tripple (Adult Foster Care Licensing Supervisor), Michelle McIntosh (Child Foster Care Licensing Supervisor), Sarah Amundson (Child and Family Services Division Manager) and Commissioner Karwoski (Chair of the County Board). Commissioners Bigham, Kriesel and Miron also attended to honor newly licensed providers and present special recognition awards to providers celebrating milestone years of service.

The following adult foster care providers were recognized for:

5 years of service:

- Jill Anderson-Brindamour and Roy Brindamour



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- Malissa Costanzo and Kelvin McInnis (not pictured)
- Nancy Faltas



- Rodney LeClaire



- Pam and Wes Johnson



10 years of service:

- Isabelle Atem



- Jaime Katz



- Charlotte and Melchor Gonzales



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- Jody Mogren



- Xong Mouacheupao (not pictured)
- Roxanne Smith



20 years of service:

- Lynn Cozad



25 years of service:

- Linda Koslowski



We hope the evening offered an opportunity for attendees to connect with other providers and enjoy a brief respite from the challenging work you do on a daily basis. We acknowledge there were many providers who hit milestones since our last event in 2019, and your hard work does not go unnoticed. The Adult Foster Care Licensing Unit sincerely appreciates the care you provide for vulnerable adults!

Housing Support Contract Reminder!

The housing support (room and board – formerly Group Residential Housing [GRH]) rate is going up to \$1,170 starting July 1, 2024. This rate is set each year by the state. These state funds help cover the cost of rent, food, utilities, household supplies, maintenance, cleaning and trash collection. Individuals in placement are eligible for this support based on their income and assets.

Providers must have a contract with the county in order to receive housing support funding. New contracts for 2024-2025 will go out within the next month. If you have a person who is eligible for housing support, you must complete and return the contract. Housing support payments may stop if you fail to return the contract when due.

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Emails you receive regarding housing support may come from Bethany Edgar, Rebecca Conroy, or comsvs-contracts@co.washington.mn.us. *Double check your spam folder if you do not receive communication*

about these contracts. Please review the contracts thoroughly as they list required items that housing support is intended to cover. Contact your licensor with any questions.

Correction Orders and Repeated Violations

Licensors are responsible for monitoring their providers' compliance with the adult foster care rule ([9555 - MN Rules Chapter](#)). This is to ensure that both the provider and those in your care are safe. After the annual visit, licensors will give the providers a list of things to correct along with a deadline. *These items must be corrected to comply with the adult foster care rule.* If licensors don't find anything out of compliance, they don't issue a correction order.

When responding to the correction order, you must explain how you fixed the violation and the date it was fixed. *Once you address all the violations you should sign it and return it to your licensor by the deadline.* We may request photos of specific items be sent along with the order. If you have questions or need more time to correct a violation, you must contact your licensor.

The plan you come up with to fix the violation should be a long-term fix to the problem. For example, if you were cited for not conducting quarterly fire drills it would not be acceptable to just write "Ran a drill on Tuesday." This is **not** a long-term solution. A better plan would be to mark a calendar for drills for the year and follow this schedule.

When we see the same violation occurring repeatedly, we may write on the correction order that it is a repeat violation. This is to make you aware that you need to develop a better plan so the violation does not keep happening. If DHS sees that corrections orders continue to occur on the same issue year after year, they recommend this becomes a negative licensing action. *A negative licensing action can include a fine, a conditional license or in some cases a license revocation.*

We strongly encourage you to first consult with your licensor ahead of time if you are running into issues that could result in a correction order. If we know about these issues beforehand, we can work together to resolve them. *If we do not discover issues until the licensing visit, it will likely result in a correction order.* If you are getting cited for repeated violations, please contact your licensor. We can help problem-solve a more long-term solution. Please be aware that if you receive repeated violations of the same issue, it can lead to more significant licensing actions.

Fire and Severe Weather Drill Tips

Adult foster care providers are required to run quarterly fire drills, and providers should also complete other severe weather drills (tornado, flooding, power outage) regularly. Be honest, are you someone who runs fire and severe weather drills the same way each time? Maybe you start fire drills using the same egress, at the same time, on the same day every quarter.

Of course, no one wants to be in a legitimate severe weather situation, especially a situation that involves vulnerable adults who may have impaired mobility or

a limited understanding of what to do in a serious emergency. Practice is the best way to prepare for a weather emergency and keep everyone safe. We have some tips for running more effective fire and severe weather drills to consider:

- **Imagine a fire starting on different levels of your home.** What if your main egress is blocked? Can you easily open your windows? Can the other people who live in your home open their windows?

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Try running a simulated drill using bedroom windows or other less common escape egresses, such as through the garage or back door.

- **Drills are meant to be unexpected in order to see how household members will respond.** Some people may experience sensitivity to loud noises or surprises, but whenever possible do not announce that there will be a drill. We also suggest completing drills on different days/times. If you are in a routine of doing drills on the first of every month, your residents will expect this and may not react with urgency.
- **Your substitute caregivers should practice drills as well.** There could be a severe weather crisis while you are out of the home. Make sure all caregivers get a chance to practice evacuating with residents so they feel confident in what to do in case of emergency.
- **Your escape plan should identify where to meet in case of a fire or severe storm.** Everyone in the home should be able to access these meeting spots

independently when possible. Test your residents' knowledge to be sure they know where to meet outside of the home.

- **Don't wait until a licensing visit to complete your drill log.** You should be updating this log as you conduct drills throughout the year. The log has space to enter the date, amount of time it took for everyone to evacuate, the number of residents participating, and an area to verify you have tested your detectors. Consider putting your drill log on the fridge or another visible place in the home so you are reminded to update it.
- **Reminder: If your resident would not be able to react to an emergency independently, they likely should not have alone time.** Please ensure their individual plans indicate these areas of vulnerability.

[View our Washington County Adult Foster Care Fire and Tornado Drill Log.](#)

Fun in the Sun



Looking for some fun activities to do this summer? Washington County has a variety of events for people of all backgrounds to enjoy! The Licensing team tries to ensure all events listed are as up-to-date as possible, but please look for the event website or contact venues to see if any information has changed since this newsletter's release.

Yoga in the Park

Reconnect with the rhythms of nature as you flow through a variety of yoga poses under the open sky with Yoga in the Park! Embrace the tranquility of outdoor yoga and find your inner balance while soaking in the beauty of your surroundings. *All levels are welcome* to join in this uplifting experience and the revitalizing journey of mind, body and nature.

Lake Elmo Park Reserve will host Yoga in the Park on the dates below from 6-7 p.m:

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| • June 20 | • July 25 | • August 22 |
| • June 27 | • August 1 | • August 29 |
| • July 11 | • August 8 | • September 5 |
| • July 18 | • August 15 | |

A season pass is available for \$120 or you can join an individual class for \$10. *A vehicle permit is required to enter the park.* Grab your water and a yoga mat, and head to Lake Elmo this summer!

View more information on the [Upcoming Events calendar on the Washington County website.](#)

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Cottage Grove Strawberry Fest

Over the course of the four-day festival, you can find food trucks, carnival rides and games, live entertainment, fireworks, and a parade.

June 20-23 | Hours vary
Kingston Park, Cottage Grove

View more information on the [Cottage Grove Strawberry Fest website](#).

Midsommardagen

Midsommardagen is one of the most important holidays in Sweden and one of the most uniquely Swedish in the way it is celebrated. The Majstång (the Swedish version of a Maypole) is decorated with greens and flowers and then raised in the center of town. Traditional Swedish music and dances celebrate the long days of summer. In Scandia, the celebration includes the raising of the Majstång on the Gammelgården museum grounds followed by a program of music and folk dances. Also to be enjoyed are children's Swedish activities, games, and crafts; a performance by the Scandia Band; an arts and craft fair; artisan demonstrations; and self-guided tours of the historic buildings. You are encouraged to bring a picnic as there will be limited food and beverage options.

Saturday, June 22 | 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Gammelgården Museum, Scandia

Midsommardagen is free to enter. Get more information and register ahead of time on the [Eventbrite Midsommardagen website](#).

Oakdale Summerfest

Oakdale is holding their annual Summerfest Celebration with fun for people of all ages. Put up your lawn chair and collect candy at the parade, dance to live music at the bandshell, feast at the food trucks, race in the 5K, hunt for the medallion, and finish the event with a fireworks extravaganza! Stop by the Washington County booth.

June 24-29
Walton Park, Oakdale

View more information on the [Oakdale Summerfest website](#).

Washington County Fair

Find food vendors, rides, exhibits, live entertainment and more. Daily admission is \$10 (free for children under 8)

with a season pass available for purchase.

July 31-August 4

Washington County Fairgrounds, Stillwater

View fair hours and more details on the [Washington County Fair website](#).

Arts in the Park

Forest Lake is holding their Arts in the Park series featuring a farmer's market, craft fair, food trucks, and live music. *Arts in the Park is free and open to people of all ages.*

Every Tuesday night (*through August 27 but excluding July 2*) | 5-9 p.m.

Lakeside Memorial Park, Forest Lake

View more about this event series on the [Forest Lake Parks & Recreation's Arts in the Park website](#).

Campfire Program

Lake Elmo Park Reserve and St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park will host campfire programs featuring area naturalists presenting on a variety of topics such as animals of the St. Croix, reptiles and amphibians, raptors and more. Each program will present live creatures, facts and/or exhibits for hands-on, family learning. There will be a bonfire when the weather allows. *All campfire programs are free to campers and visitors with a vehicle permit (\$7/day or \$30/annual).*

Throughout the summer | 7-8 p.m.

Lake Elmo Park Reserve and St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park

View more information on the [Upcoming Events calendar on the Washington County website](#).

Learn to Paddle

Washington County Parks is partnering with Wild Rivers Conservancy to teach beginners from diverse backgrounds how to paddle kayaks this summer! Programs will take place at either:

- **Square Lake Park**, Stillwater
- **Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park**, Cottage Grove

Pre-registration is required, but the program is free.

This program is recommended for ages 12 and above with a limited number of participants based on the location.

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A daily Washington County Parks permit will be provided for each participant along with a kayak, life jacket and paddle. The [registration link](#) will close on Monday prior to the scheduled date. To ensure all who would like to participate are able to, there is a limit of one, two-hour session per person. Registration is prioritized for those who live in Washington County and identify as one or more of the following demographics:

- Black, Indigenous, People of Color
- Ages 65 or older
- Low-income (annual income of \$60,000 or less)
- LGBTQIA+
- Disability

How to: Minnesota Workers' Compensation Law Certificate of Compliance

Part of the licensing process is the completion of the Certificate of Compliance for Minnesota Workers' Compensation Law. *This form is required by the state of Minnesota and is to be completed in its entirety at the initial licensing and every license renewal.*

When completing the form, answer all applicable prompts. This information will include your business name which is the name of the license holder(s); address (including city, zip code and county); phone number, email and license number.

Most adult foster care providers are not required to have workers' compensation insurance. However, the reason may vary. *If you do not have a workers' compensation policy, you must explain why your caregivers are not required to have coverage in the designated box.* If you have questions regarding the requirement of workers' compensation and/or your explanation for not needing it, please direct all questions to the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI). The contact information for DLI is located at the top of the form.

Are You or Someone You are Caring for Experiencing a Mental Health Crisis?

You are not alone! The **Washington County Crisis Response Unit** provides mobile mental health crisis services for adults and children. *Available 24 hours a day.*

Mental health crisis services are face-to-face, short-term, intensive mental health services that assist and support individuals and families with:

- Crisis counseling
- Resources and information
- Referral(s) to on-going services
- Navigating the mental health system

Phone: 651-275-7400 | Fax: 651-275-7401 | [Email Crisis Response](#)

Other resources:

- **Crisis Text Line:** Text MN to 741741
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 800-273-TALK (800-273-8255)
- **National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI) MN:**
1-888-NAMI-Helps (1-888-626-4435) | [Email NAMI](#) | [NAMI MN website](#)

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