

Self-Directed Service News

Consumer-Directed Community Supports (CDCS)

Per feedback from previous CDCS Orientation participants: In 2025, we will continue to hold CDCS Orientations on a **virtual platform (Teams - online)**. There will be sessions offered the second Wednesday of every month, which alternate between morning and evening sessions depending on the month.

CDCS participants are expected to attend only one session within 30 days of starting the CDCS program.

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

[Community Services Website](#)

Stay Connected, Stay Informed

After a short hiatus, we are excited to announce the new editing team for the Community Links Newsletter. First off, we chose to rename the newsletter in an effort to broaden our reach to more residents of Washington County. The cornerstone of the newsletter is to link residents involved with Access, Aging, and Disability Services to programs, useful information, and community resources.

Submitted by: Rachel Carpenter, Case Management Supervisor; Txing Vang, Planner; and Jonathan Vang, Senior Social Worker.

Community First Services and Supports (CFSS)

CFSS is a new program that started Oct. 1, 2024. This program replaces the programs known as Personal Care Assistant (PCA) only and Consumer Support Grant (CSG), with these programs ultimately phasing out over time CFSS offers flexible options to support people with greater independence in their homes and communities.

[Visit the Department of Human Services' \(DHS\) CFSS website for more information.](#)

Group Respite Opportunity Coming to Forest Lake in February!

An opportunity for people with early memory loss to explore new places, engage with others, and connect to community.

Forest Lake YMCA | 19845 Forest Road N., Forest Lake

For more information and how to get registered, [email FamilyMeans staff](#) or call 651-439-4840.

Exciting Opportunity for Horseback Riders

St. Croix Trail Blazers (SCTB), located in Stillwater, offers adapted riding sessions for ages six and up. They teach the rider the necessary skills to ride a horse as independently as possible. SCTB is not a hippotherapy program where the movement of the horse is a treatment tool for physical, occupational, or speech therapy. *They do not have leaders or side walkers.*

Participants must:

- Be able to:
 - Mount/dismount using a ramp or mounting block with minimal assistance.
 - Support themselves independently on the horse.
 - Hold onto and use reins with both hands.

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Please talk with your case manager about signing up for CDCS Orientation.

You will be sent a training packet and emailed a training link.

2025 CDCS Orientation sessions: (Wednesdays)

- Feb. 12 | 6-8 p.m.
Mar. 12 | 9-11 a.m.
April 9 | 6-8 p.m.
May 14 | 9-11 a.m.
June 11 | 6-8 p.m.
July 9 | 9-11 a.m.
Aug. 13 | 6-8 p.m.
Sept. 10 | 9-11 a.m.
Oct. 8 | 6-8 p.m.
Nov. 5 | 9-11 a.m.
Dec. 10 | 6-8 p.m.

2025 CDCS Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Increase

Families currently on Developmental Disabilities (DD), Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI), Community Alternative Care (CAC), Brain Injury (BI), Elderly Waivers (EW), Alternative Care (AC) Program, and participating in the CDCS program will have an increase of 4.53% to

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- Give verbal commands to direct a horse.
Weigh less than 225 pounds.

For more information, contact St. Croix Trail Blazers by calling 651-348-2786 or by emailing Karen. Visit the St. Croix Trail Blazers website or Facebook at St. Croix Trail Blazers.

When do I renew my Medical Assistance (MA) Benefits?

Your renewal date is based on the anniversary of your original enrollment date. MA enrollees will receive a pre-renewal notice in the mail about three months before your anniversary date.

Visit DHS' Renew My Coverage/When do I renew? website for more information.

30th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference

Join Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) for the 30th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference. This milestone event offers a wealth of insights and resources on Autism, featuring inspiring keynote speakers and informative breakout sessions for individuals, families, educators, and professionals. Don't miss this opportunity to connect and learn!

April 16-18, 2025

DoubleTree by Hilton Minneapolis Airport Hotel, Minneapolis

Visit AuSM's website for more information and to register for the conference.

Winter Fun in Washington County Parks

Trails at Your Pace – Winter Recommendations

Washington County Parks has highlighted accessible routes within the parks that allow for users of all backgrounds to enjoy time out in nature. These paths, also known as Trails at Your Pace, are designated on gentle sloping and paved terrain with benches along the way to rest. This winter, check out the Lake Elmo Park Reserve's suggested trail where fields of prairie and rolling hills of forest can be seen. This trail is both plowed and salted throughout the winter months, making it the perfect winter stroll. This trail begins at the Eagle Point Trailhead and includes a one mile out-and-back trail with a bench located halfway through. Water and restrooms are available across the street at the Nordic Center.

- Now Available – Kids Adaptive Sit-Ski for Rent at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park Try out skiing this winter with the little one! Washington County Parks rents a children's adaptive sit-ski for users of all abilities to try cross country skiing. With the help of a



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their CDCS budget amounts as of Jan. 1, 2025.

Washington County staff will be sending an update with instructions to your assigned case managers on accessing this COLA amount in your CDCS plan.

Minimum staff wage also increases to \$20 per hour.

Contact Us for Article Submissions:

For questions or to submit articles, contact:

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651-275-8713
[Email Txing](#)

Sign Up for this Newsletter

Sign up to receive this newsletter via email or text using 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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push bar, this sit-ski glides through the snow or users can propel themselves with adjustable ski poles.

Rental information:

Available 9 a.m.-5 p.m. or upon request (when snow conditions allow) only at Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park. Rental fee/duration: \$5 | Three hours. Call 651-430-8226 for availability.

[Visit the Washington County Parks Equipment Rentals website for more information.](#)

Need Assistance Completing Benefits Forms?

Washington County Community Services navigators can help complete benefit forms for:

- Cash assistance
- Food support
- Crisis intervention services
- Energy assistance
- Medical Assistance

Call: 651-430-6455 | Toll-free: 1-844-711-1907 | TTY: 651-430-6246 | [Email Navigators](#)

Valley Friendship Club (VFC) News



Having Fun Making Friends

Valley Friendship Club provides social activities for kids, teens, and adults with disabilities. VFC averages about 50 events per month. Join VFC this winter for exciting outdoor activities such as snow tubing, snowshoeing, and ice fishing. VFC also has plenty of fun indoor activities to keep you warm such as Dining Out with Friends, Cooking with Friends, Healthy Relationship Classes with Mad Hatter Wellness, a Valentine's Dance, special Kids Connect Playdates, and so much more. If you want to stay active this winter, VFC has activities for any age. You can join a Yoga Friends class, our Fit Friends class, or our Young Athletes Program with Special Olympics.

VFC has a new partnership with Stillwater Community Education to offer adapted classes to adults with disabilities. This winter you can learn Inclusive Pickleball, try your hand at Indian or Thai cooking, make friendship bracelets, or join a Foam, Slime and Potions class. If you love to dance, come learn a new line dance to Mama Mia.

VFC hosts a variety of engaging events both online and in-person each weekday, including Book Club, Hub Hangout, Arts & Crafts with Angelina, and Bingo. [View VFC's full Events calendar on the Valley Friendship Club website.](#) Kids, teens, and adults are welcome! Have fun making friends!

[Visit the Valley Friendship Club website for more information.](#)