

# The STAR Newsletter

## Adult Foster Care (AFC) Issue

### New Contact Information



Please keep us informed of any changes to your email address and home/cell phone numbers.

Contact your licenser directly with updates.

### 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](#)

### Washington County Email Changes

Heads up: Washington County individual emails have changed from @co.washington.mn.us to @washingtoncountymn.gov. If the people you serve are supported by other Washington County employees or case managers, you may need to update your records to reflect this email change. Emails will automatically be sent to the .gov address if someone continues to email the prior format.

Program/group email addresses, like ComSvsAFCLicensing@co.washington.mn.us, will also be changing to @washingtoncountymn.gov later this year.

### Winter Wonderland



We asked providers what they are looking forward to this winter and received some great responses! Some people cozy up, some embrace the cold, and others use this time to plan their next adventure. We hope you use this season to relax and prepare for the year ahead, whatever that may look like.

- **Amparo Giraldo Florez** (Lake Elmo):

When I first moved to Minnesota from South Carolina, people warned me that the winters in Minnesota would be terrible. But guess what? It is mostly in your attitude. I grew up in Colombia, the country, so I feel we are so lucky in Minnesota to have all four seasons. Colombia doesn't have seasons. Thanks to the Minnesota winter, I get to do the Polar Plunge and take therapeutic cold showers. So now, if someone asks about Minnesota winters, I don't warn them about the winter. I tell them how much they can look forward to the variety of the seasons! We are lucky to live in Minnesota.

- **Ifey Cley** (Cottage Grove): Fresh, crisp air - The stillness of a snowy morning and that invigorating chill feels refreshing. I inhale the fresh air and feel very refreshed to kick start my day. Cooking and baking - The chill air calls for hearty soups, fresh-baked cookies, and warm, spiced treats. I LOVE, LOVE my soups and cinnamon honey ginger tea and baked bread or cookies. Finally, cozy comforts - There's nothing like curling up under a soft blanket with a good book or a hot drink. Who can say 'no' to these?
- **Natalie Rankins** (Woodbury): We are looking forward to going on a Disney trip with our clients this spring! We will be going to Disney World in Orlando! We have bought

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different color Disney shirts for our group to wear each day that we are there! We plan to go to Epcot, Animal Kingdom, Magic Kingdom, and Universal Studios! I have also bought both of my clients Disney backpack purses and matching wallets and Disney headrests for the plane ride! We are very excited for this trip!

- **Jaime Katz (Woodbury):** My resident is going to Naples, Florida with her best friend in a couple weeks. We had a musical 2024 and went to a bunch of concerts together including Stevie Wonder, Cyndi Lauper, Luke Bryan, Willie Nelson/Bob Dylan/John Mellencamp, and John Michael Montgomery. My resident went to a Jimmy Buffet tribute concert with her best friend. In the winter, my resident does "Let's Make Stuff" free art classes at Washington

County libraries and does a book club with them. We do bowling, bingo, the casino, watching Vikings games at sports bars, etc.

- **Abdi Gemada (Oakdale):** This winter, I'm looking forward to visiting the Mall of America in Bloomington. It's the perfect place to stay warm indoors while enjoying all the exciting attractions like Nickelodeon Universe and the SEA LIFE Aquarium. I'm also hoping to explore some of the seasonal events and soak in the cozy winter vibes that Minnesota offers. Winter always brings such a unique charm, and I can't wait to make the most of it! We've been fortunate to have great weather these past two years, though I do miss the snow. Here's hoping for one or two more snowy days - let's go, MN!

## Upcoming Mandated Reporting Training

Thank you to everyone who attended January's Provider Training Group: Understanding the Spectrum of Decision-Making Options for Adults with Cognitive Incapacities, presented by Volunteers of America.

Our next **Vulnerable Adult Mandated Reporter training** will be held virtually on March 12, 2025. More details,

including the link, will be emailed to all providers closer to the training date. *This is a required annual training we typically host in March and September.* If you are unable to make one of these trainings, contact your licensor for alternative ways to meet this training requirement. We hope to see you there!

## Common Application Errors

The Family Systems License Application is due at initial licensing and every following relicensing visit. This six-page application details a lot of information and it can be easy to miss things. Please read the application thoroughly and contact your licensor with any questions. Consider the tips below the next time you are completing the form:

- **Missing Signatures and Authorized Agents**  
Often times, providers sign under the applicant boxes on page 5 without realizing there is a page 6 that requires the authorized agent's signature. *If you are an individual provider with no co-applicant, you are the authorized agent.* If you have co-applicants, you should be aware who your authorized agent is. The agent is authorized to accept service on behalf of all of the individual license holders of the program. Service on the agent is service on all of the individual

license holders of the program. *It is the responsibility of the authorized agent to ensure that any mail received from the Department of Human Services (DHS) is distributed as needed and a response provided within stated timelines when required.*

Double check which line you are signing on page 6. *The first line is for initial application only.*

At relicensing, you will sign the second signature line which is indicated for license renewal, update, or a change of premise.

- **Social Security Number**  
*You are required to enter your Social Security Number (SSN) on page 2 of the Family Systems License Application.* If you are an individual provider, it makes sense to include just one SSN. *If you have*

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co-applicants, please include all SSNs and initial next to the SSN so we know who it belongs to.

We are unable to determine which SSN belongs to each applicant if this is not indicated.

- **Pay Attention to Each Item**

Be sure to review each numbered item and read the instructions in parenthesis if provided. This includes the type of license, license history, population served, and more. Often times, the dwelling information in question 6 is left empty. *Please note that all applicable boxes in this section need to be checked.*

Is your home owned or rented? How many floors are in the home? Do you have an attached garage? These things need to be indicated in each application.

Question 7 asks about individuals living in the home; *this does not include residents receiving*

services in the home. You should use this space to list household members or roomers.

Some items are only required at initial licensing/ change of premise and do not need to be updated at each relicensing, such as references (question 8) and municipality (question 12).

- **Notarization**

Under question 15, you will see instructions for when notarization is required. *This is only needed at initial licensing*, but we see some providers worry at relicensing because they think they have forgotten a signature from a notarial official. Make sure you understand what you are signing. You can always contact your licenser for help or clarification!

## Recycling Centers and Medication Disposal

### Environmental Centers

Forest Lake's Environmental Center (6065 Headwaters Pkwy. Forest Lake, MN) is now open! There is also an Environmental Center in Woodbury (4039 Cottage Grove Dr. Woodbury, MN). These centers accept certain hazardous materials, electronics, food scraps, and household sharps.

Did you know that Washington County Environmental Centers have free product rooms? Look for items such as latex and oil paints, household cleaners, automotive supplies, and much more. All products brought to an Environmental Center are inspected to determine if they are usable. If the container and product are in good shape, it is put in the Free Product Room for others to take. One person's waste can be another's useful product!

View more information, including hours of operation, on the [Washington County Environmental Center Drop Off Brochure](#).

### Household Medication Disposal

Additionally, Washington County residents can drop-off medications at multiple locations including Stillwater, Cottage Grove, Woodbury, and Forest Lake Service Centers. Household medications accepted include prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins,

supplements, and pet medications. *Drop-off is anonymous and no identification (ID) is required to use this service.*

Old and unused medicines in your home can pose a risk for accidental poisoning, theft, and drug abuse. Medications disposed of in a sink, toilet, or landfill can eventually pollute surface and groundwater and harm fish and wildlife. Instead of flushing or

throwing them in the trash, drop the medication off for safe and free disposal.

Learn more about accepted items and drop-off procedures by viewing the [Washington County Unused Medications Brochure](#).



## Reminder to Issue Certificates of Rent Paid Form

All AFC providers should have issued their residents a Certificate of Rent Paid (CRP) form by Jan. 31, 2025. Residents need this form to apply for a Renter's Property Tax Refund. *Do not issue a CRP if the person's entire room and board cost was paid for by Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA), or Housing Support funds.* If assistance programs pay only part (or none) of a resident's care, you must issue a CRP.

*Beginning with the 2024 CRPs, providers must create and submit all Minnesota CRPs using e-Services.* You will need to create an e-Services account if you do not have one already.

View more information on issuing CRPs via these Minnesota Department of Revenue links:

- [CRPs for Health Care Facilities website](#)
- [Create a Certificate of Rent Paid \(CRP\) website](#)

## Frostbite and Hypothermia Alert

Everyone is at risk from the dangers of cold weather, but certain populations are more vulnerable than others. This includes elderly and chronically ill individuals. Age and certain conditions make it more difficult for the body to regulate its temperature. Each year, the Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities receives reports of death or serious injury caused by exposure to extreme cold.

### What is frostbite?

Frostbite is a type of injury caused by freezing, which can occur whenever outside temperatures are 32 degrees Fahrenheit or less. It leads to a loss of feeling and color in affected areas, which are usually areas of exposed skin with little insulation, such as the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes. Frostbite can permanently damage the body, and severe cases can lead to amputation. A person who has frostbite may not know they have it until someone else points it out because the frozen parts of their body are numb. Changes in the color of an affected area might be difficult to see on darker skin.

Signs and symptoms include a feeling of pins and needles, followed by numbness. Affected skin will likely be cold, pale, and hard, and it will turn red and be quite painful as the area warms up again. If the frostbite is severe, blisters and blackened skin may appear.

### What is hypothermia?

Hypothermia is a serious condition that can happen when a person is exposed to cold temperatures for prolonged periods of time. It happens when a person loses body heat faster than they can produce it. Long exposures will use up the body's energy stores, causing a decrease in your body temperature. This can affect the brain, causing confusion and difficulty moving. While hypothermia

usually happens at very low temperatures, it can happen even at cool temperatures (i.e. 40 - 50 degrees Fahrenheit) if someone is wet from rain, sweat, or submersion. Elderly people, infants, those who spend long periods of time outside, and those who drink alcohol or use substances are at increased risk for hypothermia.

Signs and symptoms include shivering, weakness, loss of coordination, feeling very tired, difficulty thinking, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech, and drowsiness. Hypothermia can be fatal.

### Risk factors for frostbite and hypothermia

- Cold temperatures, especially with high winds (wind chill factor).
- Poor circulation, as can happen with diabetes mellitus, peripheral vascular disease, Raynaud's phenomenon, or those who smoke.
- Altered mental status.
- Difficulty retaining body heat, which affects infants, elderly people, and those with limited mobility.
- Clothes that aren't appropriate for cold weather.
- Lack of winter-appropriate clothing items, including gloves, a hat, a coat, and appropriate footwear.
- Wet clothes.
- Lack of an adequate shelter.
- Alcohol and/or drug use.

### Preventing frostbite and hypothermia

- Be aware of the temperature before going out, including the wind chill factor. [View the National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart.](#)
- Wear several layers of warm clothing, as well as protection against dampness and wind.

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- Wear a warm hat, since a lot of body heat is lost if the head isn't covered. If gloves, hats, socks, or other clothes get wet, change them out as quickly as possible.
- When traveling in cold weather, carry emergency supplies such as extra warm clothing and a cell phone with an extra charger in case you become stranded.
- Try to have a plan for sheltering somewhere warm.
- If you have to be outside for a longer period of time, cover your ears, nose, and chin.

#### First aid and treatment

- Get out of the cold and into a warm place and remove any wet clothes.
- Hypothermia is a medical emergency. If any signs or symptoms are noted and/or the body temperature is 95 degrees Fahrenheit or less, call 911 for immediate medical care.
- If medical help is not immediately available, provide first aid. Soak frostbitten areas in warm (never hot) water for 20 - 30 minutes. For ears, nose, and cheeks, apply a warm cloth repeatedly. Severe burning pain, swelling, and color changes are expected during warming. Do not rub areas with frostbite, and do not disturb blisters.
- Cover the person with warm blankets, making sure the head and neck are covered.
- Give warm drinks to replace lost fluids and help increase the body temperature, if the person is able to drink.
- Report hypothermia caused by exposure as well as frostbite with blisters or the need for medical treatment to the Ombudsman Office as a serious injury.

Visit the Minnesota Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities [Reporting a Death or Serious Injury web page](#) to learn more about death or serious injury reporting.

Source: Adapted from [Minnesota Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities' Winter 2023-2024 Medical Alert Letter](#)

## 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
- Referral(s) to on-going services
- Resources and information
- 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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