



Dane County Department of Human Services

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Dane County Department of Human Services 2022 Request Budget Summary

I am pleased and proud to submit my budget proposal for 2022. It represents—again—the best of staff wisdom to continue the critical supports and services that thousands of Dane County residents rely on us for. The Department's 2022 budget request totals \$242,271,969. This breaks down into over \$159.4 million in outside revenue and \$82,797,782 million in county levy. The proposal meets the expectation of not increasing our reliance on local levy dollars, as directed.

2021 has tested DCDHS in ways that mirror the challenges and resilience we see in our community every day. We took slow, cautious and careful steps to do more community work in the midst of an ongoing pandemic. Department staff continued to pivot, on sometimes a daily basis, to meet the needs of our friends and neighbors under difficult and continuously evolving circumstances. The true test in 2021 was to keep service delivery stable as the community reopened ahead of a COVID resurgence that is now again urging a cautious retreat. The pandemic has presented countless opportunities to rise and strive to do better. And we have risen to the occasion over and over again. I am very proud of that, and also humbled. The fortitude of our employees on the front line is nothing short of amazing.

Major areas of service expansion this year included housing, homelessness support and behavioral health. These emerged as critical themes for our [Vision: Next Strategic Plan](#) and our day-to-day reality. Caseload growth in CCS and CLTS alone is 44% and 62%, respectively, over the last two years. Other priorities include maintaining excellence at Badger Prairie under incredibly trying circumstances, keeping our seniors not only fed but also engaged, keeping pace with the shifting resources and opportunities to shelter and house the most vulnerable, working to bolster parents and loved ones as they worry about the mental health of the young people in their care, and helping people find the economic support they need as they navigate an unpredictable labor market. These are all complex, daily challenges for our staff and providers that are compounded and exacerbated by COVID.

And our department itself—through a ballooning responsibility that appears likely to add more than \$100 million in new pandemic related spending with roughly the same level of administrative capacity and support of pre-COVID times, perseveres as well. Times of great stress have produced an amazing level of creativity in terms of achieving efficiencies and a new willingness to do things differently. Examples include online grant applications, new partnerships with BIPOC-led organizations and being willing to take important steps in having necessary, difficult and stretching conversations about our role in pursuing racial justice.

The DCDHS Budget Proposal for 2022 continues the critical ongoing work of the department while also striving to build and plan for the needs of the future regardless of the pandemic. This proposal seeks to amplify our efforts around youth mentoring, internal and external communications, staff training, support for economic development and needed investments in housing and behavioral health infrastructure. I have challenged our team to submit ideas that are grounded in our [DCDHS values](#) and that build upon the success we've seen ([2019 Annual Report](#), [2020 Annual Report](#)). While we were hopeful that the new state budget would have provided additional resources for child welfare and economic support, we have taken advantage of the opportunities that did present themselves to keep the POS landscape stable.

The following are some specific highlights of the budget proposal:

- Creation of a Communications Manager position to help the department better communicate internally and externally with our staff and stakeholders.
- Creation of an Economic and Community Development Program Specialist position in HAA to coordinate and amplify our efforts to strengthen our local communities and staff the Economic and Workforce Development Commission.
- Creating a new Kinship Care Social Worker position to meet new state mandates for case management and to enhance efforts to look for family and kin placements in lieu of other placements to better mitigate child trauma where and when possible.
- Creating a Bilingual Clerk position to provide reception services at the Badger Road building when we are able to safely open our doors to in-person service at that new consolidated service site.
- Adding staff support to maintain excellent customer service for both CLTS and CCS as those programs continue to expand at a rapid pace. This includes a Clerk position, 2 Quality Assurance Specialists, 4 Social Workers and a Supervisor.
- Continuing to try new approaches to engage and mentor our young people. DCDHS will hire 5 LTE Youth Mentors in our Youth Justice program.
- Increasing our budget to support translation services to our communities.
- Restoring funding to support the Mount Horeb Youth Resource Center.
- Creating a new position to focus on finding, delivering and tracking the best possible staff training for our DCDHS Social Workers.
- Increasing wrap-around services for our CYF families.
- Expanding our partnership with Mt. Zion Baptist Church to facilitate faith-based youth mentoring.

DCDHS is not where we want to be as it relates to achieving our vision, but the pandemic has pushed us in ways that are meaningful and important. We appreciate the support and acknowledgement of our administration and policy makers more than you will ever know. There have been many difficult days, but there have also been many victories.

Thank you for your leadership as we navigate these challenges together.

Shawn Tessmann