



2023

Annual Report

Public Health

Economic Support

Child & Youth Services

Behavioral Health Services

Administrative & Financial Services

ADRC of Eagle County – Richland Center

Community Services Building
221 W. Seminary Street, Richland Center, WI 53581
Phone: (608) 647-8821 Fax: (608)647-6611
ADRC Phone: (608) 647-4616 or (877) 794-2372 Fax: (608) 647-6611



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FROM THE DIRECTOR

To: Honorable Richland County Board Supervisors and Citizens of Richland County

On behalf of the Health and Human Services and Veterans Standing Committee and agency staff, I am pleased to present the 2023 Annual Report. This document contains program and statistical information related to services; listing of our associated committees, boards and contract providers; and financial data related to our budget.

In early 2023, Rose Kohout retired as the Public Health Officer/Manager. She was a calming force throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This brought on a new Manager/Public Health Officer. With this change, also came restructuring. Public Health transitioned from being all nurses to incorporating public health specialists into the unit.

A new manager was hired in the Behavioral Health Unit. The year brought periods of time that the unit was fully staffed; something that had not happened in years.

Our Administrative and Building Operations Manager left in 2023. This is a position that we did not fill as her duties were absorbed by the Business and Financial Services Manager and the Confidential Administrative Secretaries.

Our Economic Support unit spent their second half of the year focusing on Medicaid Unwinding. Throughout the pandemic, those with Medicaid had continuous coverage. Beginning in May, the workers began completing reviews on these cases to determine eligibility. Our staff worked hard and took on more than their expected share of the consortium caseload.

The beginning of 2023 brought a change to the ADRC region. The ADRC of Eagle County went from a four-county consortium with Sauk, Juneau, Crawford and Richland to a three with Sauk leaving. The senior nutrition program also moved to the ADRC from Public Health. This brought depth to the program and increased collaboration.

Child and Youth Services enjoyed stability in 2023. There was minimal staff turnover. The unit added a full time Family Preservation Worker.

Staff continue to amaze me. They prioritize the individuals they serve. They work hard and want to see people succeed. In the summer, we had a half day staff development day. This was a great opportunity to get everyone together and be revitalized. It is the goal to do this again this year. Another goal we have for 2024 is to increase collaboration across units within the Department. It is the hope that the all agency training will help to accomplish this.

As you review this report, I hope you won't hesitate to reach out with your questions. This, as well as past reports, program information, staff contacts, and meeting minutes are available on our website at www.co.richland.wi.us.

Respectfully,
Tricia Clements, Director
Richland County Health and Human Services



MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Statement

Promote the Health, Well-Being, and Self Sufficiency for All People of Richland County

In carrying out the mission of the agency, all staff and programs shall:

- Treat others fairly and with respect in a friendly, courteous, responsive and confidential manner.
- Demonstrate integrity and commitment in all actions.
- Create an environment of hope and positive expectation.
- Recognize and respect the uniqueness of individuals and families, as well as foster collaborative decision-making.
- Value diversity.
- Provide individualized services in the least intrusive and least restrictive manner possible.
- Promote collaboration within the agency and with community partners.
- Provide quality services through continuous improvement and outcome measurement.
- Manage public resources responsibly.



BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Boards & Committees (as of 12/31/2023)

Richland County Health and Human Services & Veterans Standing Committee

Ingrid Glasbrenner, Chair

Kerry Severson, Vice Chair
Cindy Chicker, Secretary
Timothy Gottschall
Francis Braithwaite
Donald Seep

Ken Rynes
Lee Van Landuyt
Dr. Jerel Berres
Sherry Hillesheim

Commission on Aging & Disability Board

Virginia Wiedenfeld
Carolyn Denman
Sandra Kramer
Larry Engel

Angela Metz
Julie Fleming
David Scribbins
Linda Symons

Nutrition Advisory Council

Roseanne Knower
Lee Van Landuyt

Linda Symons
Virginia Wiedenfeld

Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) Coordination Committee

Beth Muth
Connie Welte
Brandi Christianson
Nathan McBain
Charlie Hillman

Jessica Brown
Anna Carlson
Mackenzie Fisher
Dr. Jerel Berres



BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Coordinated Services Team (CST) Coordinating Committee

Shari Johnson
Amanda Miller
Ashley Kramer
Marjorie Fillyaw
Sue Sharp
Sarah Iverson
Sherry Hillesheim
Leah Garner

Cindy Chicker
Lisa McDougal
Tara Ruhland
Angela Tjaden
Brandie Anderson
Laurie Couey
Briana Turk

Mississippi Valley Health Services Commission

Dr. Jerel Berres

Ken Rynes

Transportation Coordinating Committee

Sandra Kramer, Chair

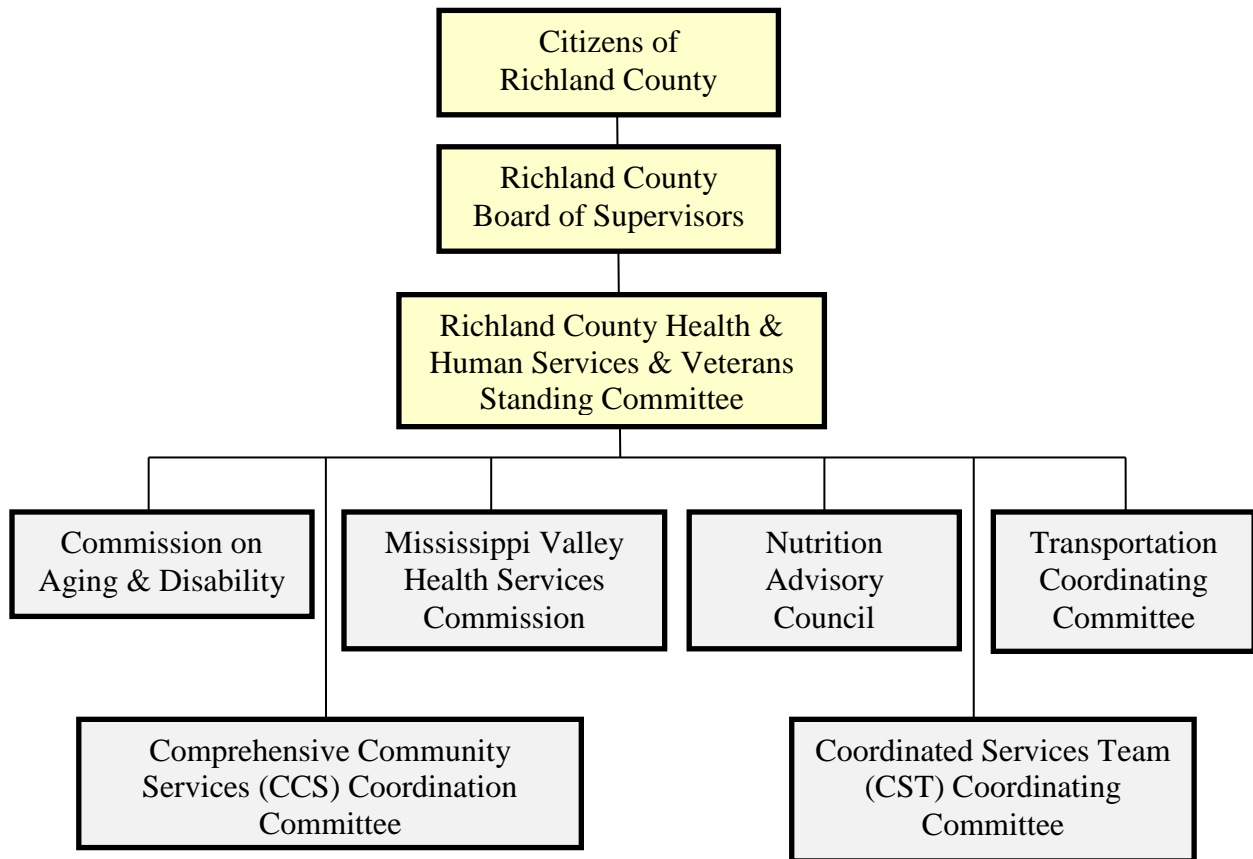
Donald Seep
Sandra McKittrick
Robert Shiere
Aaron Gray
Cindy Riley
Mary Miller

Jesse Nelson
Richard McKee
Darin Steinmetz
Linda Symons
Jeremy Walsh



BOARD ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

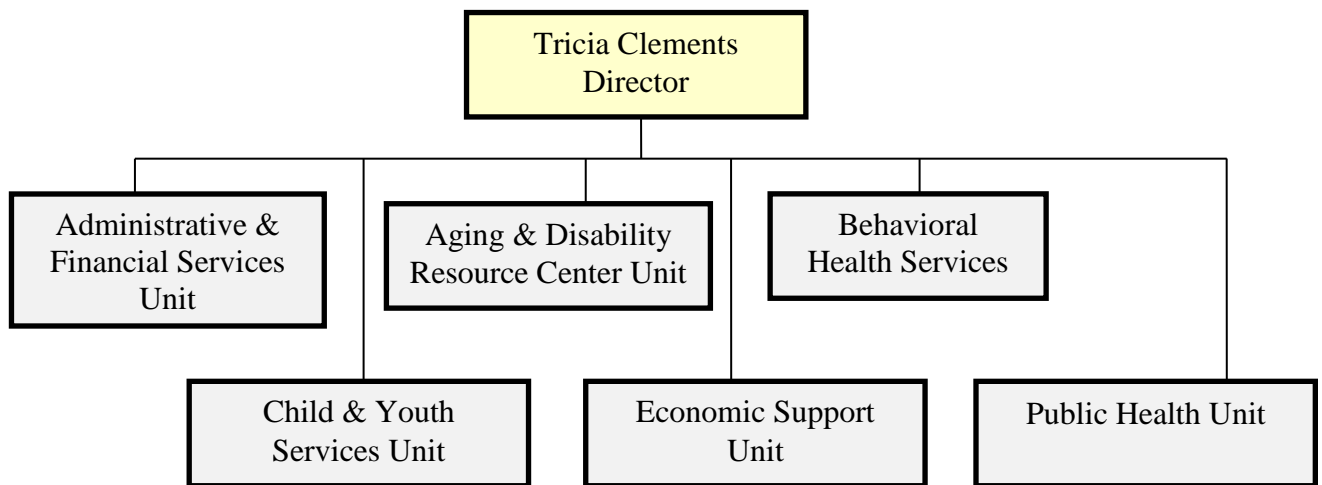
BOARD ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE





UNIT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

UNIT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE





ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

Mission Statement

The Administrative and Financial Services Unit of Richland County Health and Human Services continually strives to enhance the provision of accurate and considerate support in a confidential and timely manner to agency staff and clients.

The Administrative & Financial Services Unit is in place to provide support to the entire agency, regardless of program. Here is just a partial list of their areas of responsibility:

- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Annual Budget Preparation
- Board & Committee Support
- Cleaning & Building Maintenance Coordination
- Client Rights & Complaints
- Contracts Management
- Fiscal Reporting
- Grant & Program Claiming & Reconciliation
- Data Entry & Tracking
- Human Resources
- Office Management
- Payroll
- Public Health Immunization Clinics
- Public Information Dissemination
- Reception & Information
- Representative Payee services
- Social Media – HHS Facebook Page
- Insurance Billing
- Audit Research & Coordination

The unit staff wholeheartedly embrace the mission of striving to support agency staff and clients in an accurate, timely and considerate manner no matter the circumstances. Each and every one of them has a servant's heart in that regard.

This heart has never been more evident than with how they handled the resignation of the Administration and Building Operations Manager followed by the elimination of the position in early 2023. As a result, we consolidated the Administration & Building Operations Unit and the Business & Financial Services Unit. We are now the Administrative & Financial Services Unit under one manager.

In addition to the organizational change, the duties of the Administration and Building Operations Manager had to be absorbed. The majority of which were added to the plate of the Confidential Administrative Secretaries. This could only occur with the dedication and focus needed to streamline processes and seek out efficiencies all while continuing to provide the same high level of support the unit is known for.

221 West Seminary Street • Richland Center, WI • 53581

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ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

With that said, on top of this change, Administrative & Financial Services staff were able to meet some of the 2023 goals they set for themselves. Of special note:

- **DocuSign:** Unit staff successfully expanded the use of DocuSign in 2023 resulting in the use of DocuSign to provide efficiencies in other areas of Administration including but not limited to Human Resources paperwork. DocuSign also continued to be used to securely process over 100 annual provider contracts totaling over \$7.5m. DocuSign saves on paper and postage costs, improves the turnaround time, and expands the overall efficiency of the contracting process.
- **Electronic Health Record (EHR) System:** Unit staff were an integral part of the planning and roll-out of the new Engage module of the Behavioral Health Services Electronic Health Record (EHR) system, Tebra (previously known as Kareo), to improve efficiencies related to Main Front Desk support and document storage/filing.
- **Human Resources:** In 2023, some Human Resources functions were to be centralized at the county level. While this did not happen, it did not prevent unit staff from spending time improving processes that will remain within the unit when this does happen such as internal payroll, time-tracking, and onboarding to name a few.
- **Revenues:** Unit staff remained diligent in maximizing revenues by building tracking and monitoring systems into their billing practices for the plethora of Behavioral Health programs as well as putting those processes in writing.
- **WIMCR:** All Administrative & Financial Services staff once again achieved success in WIMCR reporting that resulted in a positive revenue adjustment.
- **Billing:** Significant strides were made to fully implement paperless EHR billing in order to complete more real-time billing in 2023. This will continue as a goal into 2024 as more programs and providers are added to Tebra and become proficient with electronic processes.
- **Financial Interviewing:** Our financial interviewing process was improved and has increased our capture of insurance information before a client is seen. This pre-appointment contact allows us to gather proper authorizations prior to a client's appointment.
- **Cross-Training:** Unit staff never shy away from continually cross-training each other to prevent lapses in completing the work required to accomplish the mission. The agency thanks each of them for this commitment.



ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

2023 Financial Summary (Un-audited)

2023 Core Expenses

Expenses by Program	2023 Budget	Actual
Administrative Services		
Staff	\$763,757	\$563,160
Building & Operating Costs	\$291,591	\$281,499
Public Health		
Public Health	\$335,192	\$208,510
Aging & Disability Resource Center		
Elderly Services	\$365,273	\$346,942
Nutrition	\$256,053	\$288,847
Resource Center	\$421,249	\$401,544
Economic Support Unit		
ES Programs	\$971,094	\$865,804
Child & Youth Services		
Children & Youth Programs	\$745,247	\$604,032
CPS Contracted Services	\$83,883	\$66,325
Behavioral Health		
MH Outpatient/Crisis Services	\$778,818	\$564,122
AODA Outpatient	\$215,092	\$87,822
CCS	\$2,873,893	\$2,393,667
Adult Protective Services	\$93,881	\$85,553
Treatment Court	\$157,614	\$129,951
Birth to Three Program	\$195,933	\$190,492
Children with Disabilities	\$177,280	\$152,858
Total	\$8,725,849	\$7,231,130



ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

2023 Revenues

Revenue by Source	Actual
County Tax Levy	\$956,085
Medicaid/Medicare (Inc. WIMCR)	\$2,563,340
ARPA Funding	\$81,757
Other Funding	\$154,921
State-Base County Allocation	\$799,243
State-Categorical Programs	\$3,002,414
Total	\$7,557,761

End of Year Core Budget Balance

End of Year Core Budget Balance	+ \$326,631
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2023 Placement Expenses

Adult (Fund 54)	
Budget	\$705,000
Expenses	-\$903,608
Tax Levy	\$705,000
Other Revenue	\$438,889
Fund 54 Balance	\$240,281
Children (Fund 44)	
Budget	\$680,000
Expenses	-\$836,737
Tax Levy	\$680,000
Other Revenue	\$113,390
Fund 44 Balance	-\$43,347

End of Year Placement Balance

End of Year Placement Balance	+ \$196,934
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ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

2023 Health & Human Services Contracts (Over \$10,000)

• A&J Vans dba A&J Mobility	\$64,789
• Annika Mersmann	\$13,015
• Children's Hospital of WI	\$70,525
• Chileda Institute	\$283,365
• Community Care Resources	\$96,737
• Cornerstone Foundation	\$179,590
• Coulee Region Psychiatric Services	\$34,500
• Diane's Adult Family Home	\$91,384
• Driftless Counseling, LLC	\$808,146
• Evergreen Manor, Inc.	\$33,589
• Family Services of NE WI	\$16,593
• Forward Home for Boys	\$108,504
• Impact Community Planning Group	\$15,105
• Jean Warrior, Ph.D	\$13,110
• Jessica Leinberger Counseling	\$23,766
• Logan James Herr Foundation, Inc.	\$23,050
• M Squared NC, LLC dba Action Fence	\$19,474
• Memorial Hospital of Boscobel, Inc.	\$11,647
• Northwest Counseling & Guidance Clinic	\$85,602
• Premier Financial Management Services	\$148,551
• RTP (WI), S.C.	\$57,627
• Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative	\$56,213
• Shay Rehabilitation & Psych Services	\$188,163
• SW WI Workforce Development Board	\$39,100
• Tellurian, Inc.	\$45,035
• TLC Home Care, LLC	\$71,693
• Vista Care Wisconsin	\$742,334
• Dean Saner, Psy. D.	\$11,864
• Hailey Schneider	\$39,328
• Hansen Assessments	\$12,900
• Highland Spring Counseling	\$15,945
• KSMS – Our House	\$15,198
• Miramont Behavioral Health	\$120,544
• Options Lab	\$10,523

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BEHAVIORAL SERVICES UNIT

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES UNIT

Mission Statement

To Individuals and families... Behavioral Health Services strives to improve the emotional well-being of individuals and families based upon their identified wants and needs by providing accessible, quality assessment, treatment, rehabilitation, education, and support in areas of mental health and addiction recovery.

To the community... Behavioral Health services endeavors to serve as a resource to the community on mental health and addiction in the areas of education, intervention, and treatment in order to promote an environment that is supportive to individuals seeking and obtaining assistance.

Overview

Behavioral Health Services provide a continuum of services to Richland County residents that range from brief crisis intervention to intensive long-term treatment services. Behavioral Health Services help individuals and families who are experiencing acute emotional crises, addiction, short-term mental health concerns, or persistent mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Treatment Court

Treatment Court is an alternative to an incarceration program for non-violent adult offenders for whom substance abuse was a contributing factor in their criminal activity. Richland County currently has Sobriety Court for those convicted of alcohol related offenses, and Drug Court for those convicted of drug related offenses. This program works closely with the Circuit Court of Richland County.

In 2023, Richland County Treatment Court served 16 consumers.

Outpatient Clinic

Richland County HHS has an outpatient mental health and substance abuse clinic that provides mental health therapy, substance abuse counseling, psychological assessments, and psychiatric care. The clinic is staffed by two therapists, a substance abuse counselor, a psychiatric nurse, a psychiatric nurse practitioner, a psychologist, and a psychiatrist. Our outpatient clinic also



BEHAVIORAL SERVICES UNIT

conducts Intoxicated Driver Assessments to assess treatment needs of those convicted of driving under the influence. Lastly, our clinic provides Choices, an educational program that is offered as an alternative sentence by the courts for underage drinking charges.

In 2023, the Behavioral Health Clinic completed 94 Intoxicated Driver Assessments, 82 Mental Health Assessments, 27 Substance Abuse Assessments, and 94 Psychiatric Assessments. 13 underage youth completed the Choices program.

Crisis

Crisis services are set up to give an individual someone to talk to, to provide a response of them, and to help find a place to go if needed to ensure the safety of themselves and/or others. Behavioral Health Staff provide walk-in crisis services, and mobile responses to crisis during regular business hours of Health and Human Services. During non-business hours, Northwest connections is a contracted service that response to crises in Richland County.

In 2023, Northwest Connections had 367 crisis contacts. Richland County HHS Crisis Staff has 1183 crisis contacts. This brings the total for 2023 to 1550 crisis contacts in Richland County.

An emergency detention occurs when an individual is taken into custody after it has been determined that they pose a risk to themselves or others. The individual is transported to a designated treatment facility where they may remain in custody for up to 72 hours while assessments are completed to determine the individuals needs and whether additional involuntary treatment is required.

In 2023, Richland County had 21 people emergency detained.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

Adult Protective Services (APS) helps elderly adults and adults at risk who have been abused, neglected, or financially exploited.

In 2023, there were 118 APS referrals



BEHAVIORAL SERVICES UNIT

Comprehensive Community Services (CCS):

Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) is a fully funded program by Medicaid that helps individuals of all ages with mental health and/or substance use disorders. The goal of CCS is to help consumers live as independently as possible in their home communities. CCS is an intensive mental health program where consumers receive treatment in their homes and the community.

In 2023, 47 consumers were served in CCS.

Mental Health Residential Services

Mental Health residential services are provided when individuals require supervised living services in order to cope with their mental health symptoms. These services are provided in Adult Family Homes (AFH) or Community-Based Residential Facilities (CBRF).

In 2023, 11 consumers received mental health residential services.

Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) Program

The Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) program helps children with disabilities and their families through supports and services that help children grow and live their best lives in their home and community.

In 2023, 78 children were served in CLTS.

Birth to Three (BT3)

Birth to 3 (BT3) is an early intervention special education program that helps children under the age of 3 who have delays or disabilities.

In 2023, 61 children were served in BT3.

Coordinated Services Team (CST)

Coordinated Services Team (CST) is for children who are involved in multiple system of care such as mental health, substance use, child welfare, juvenile justice, special education, or developmental disabilities.

In 2023, 3 children were served in CST



AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER OF EAGLE COUNTY *Richland Center Office*

Mission Statement

In the Aging and Disability Resource Center we are dedicated to working with adults and their families who are impacted by disability or aging. We will strive to enhance their self-sufficiency and quality of life by providing information, assistance and education. In doing so we will at all times promote the rights, dignity and preferences of the individual.

We also uphold the provisions under the Older Americans Act of 1965 to enable Richland County elderly residents to lead dignified and healthful lives by providing a staff and volunteer network that seeks to provide timely, friendly assistance to the elderly as they cope with various health issues and difficulties in living independently.

Overview

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) is the local office of the ADRC of Eagle Country serving Crawford, Richland and Juneau Counties. The ADRC provides information and assistance services designed to inform and connect county residents to programming, services, and public benefits. The ADRC serves:

- Adults who are elderly
- Adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities
- Adults with substance abuse issues
- Adults with mental health issues
- Youth with disabilities transitioning from children to adult services

The ADRC's Elder Benefit Specialist and a Disability Benefit Specialist provide benefits-related counseling and services to the elderly, as well as adults with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 59 years. Through the ADRC, customers can also access health-related information and services that focus on early intervention/prevention. Staff also provide intake and eligibility determination for the publicly-funded long-term care programs called IRIS (Include, Respect, I Self-Direct) and Family Care. The ADRC also provides low vision support services and transportation assistance services. In 2023, the Richland Center Office of the ADRC of Eagle Country processed 14,939 incoming contacts (phone calls or walk-in customers).

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AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

Information, Referral, Assistance and Options Counseling

Services in this key area range from providing simple information, to providing short-term case management. These services are often provided by phone or by making home visits, when more in-depth counseling is needed to discuss all care and service options, to address more complex situations and assist customers with accessing programs and services.

In 2023, ADRC Specialists received 4638 contacts from customers. Contacts are defined as first-time customers, as well as repeat customers who contact the ADRC for assistance with a new issue or need. These contacts were requests, concerns or needs that generated the provision of information, referral, assistance, options counseling, short-term case management, or early intervention/prevention services.

Publicly Funded Long-Term Care Programs

The ADRC is the intake point for State Long-Term Care Programs. In Richland County, those programs are Family Care and IRIS.

Eligibility determination and enrollment into both Family Care and IRIS is a complex process that occurs through the coordinated efforts of Economic Support, the Family Care Organization or IRIS Independent Consultant Agency, and the Aging and Disability Resource Center. It is the ADRC Specialists who guide customers through the eligibility determination and enrollment process, including:

- Conducting the Long-Term Care Functional Screen to determine functional eligibility;
- Working with the Economic Support Unit to facilitate financial eligibility;
- Providing enrollment counseling and answering questions about Family Care and IRIS;
- Completing Family Care enrollments or making referrals to the IRIS Independent Consultant Agency;
- Helping to transition customers into Family Care or IRIS; and
- Providing advocacy for customers who are having issues or concerns with their chosen long-term care program after enrollment.

In 2023, staff completed 89 Functional Screens and enrolled 77 customers into long-term care publicly funded programming.

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Disability Benefit Specialist

Disability Benefit Specialist services are available to Richland County residents ages 18 through 59 years with physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or disabilities due to mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders. The Disability Benefit Specialist provides information on public and private benefits, and assists with applications, appeals, and advocacy. Typical areas of assistance include programs, such as Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medical Assistance, and Medicare Part D. The Disability Benefit Specialist also works closely with other ADRC staff to provide referrals for community resources and services, options counseling, and information and assistance related to the long-term care benefit. The Disability Benefit Specialist position consults with a Technical Advisor who is an attorney at Disability Rights Wisconsin.

In 2023, the Disability Benefit Specialist program assisted 131 Richland County residents in receiving over \$658,315 in Federal, State or private benefits for which they qualified.

Since the Disability Benefit Specialist Program began in Richland County in 2002, the total financial impact for residents of Richland County amounts to over \$17,920,014. These positive results are not only for those who successfully obtained benefits but also for the entire community, as these individuals are now able to purchase goods and services, such as housing, food, clothing and medical treatment.

Elderly Benefit Specialist

Through the Elder Benefit Specialist Program, Richland County residents age 60 or older can receive free advocacy and assistance with issues related to public and private benefits to which they are entitled due to age, disability, or financial factors. In order to ensure high-quality advocacy and representation of program participants, the Elder Benefit Specialist receives in-depth, on-going legal training and supervision from attorneys through the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources.

The Elder Benefit Specialist works closely with ADRC Specialists to provide referrals for community resources and services, options counseling, and information and assistance related to long-term care services. The Elder Benefit Specialist provides information on program eligibility criteria, assistance applying for benefits, appealing benefit denials or incorrect benefit amounts, and also offers representation in the areas of consumer debt, landlord/tenant law, and private insurance. In an effort to address the growing need for pre-retirement information and

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AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

assistance, 10 Medicare workshops were offered. In 2023, 47 people attended to learn how to navigate Medicare Programs and an additional 294 seniors received other assistance.

In 2023, the Elder Benefit Specialist Program provided a savings to 341 Richland County residents totaling \$1,658,169 in Federal, State, and other funding based on the type of program.

These savings benefit the community as elders use the funds locally to purchase food, clothes, medication and pay for housing.

Early Intervention/Prevention Services

In partnership with the Symons Recreation Center, the ADRC provided the funding and technical support to hold Tai Chi, Strong Bodies, PALS (Physical Activity for Lifelong Success) and SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life) classes which are evidence based programs that significantly reduce falls for seniors.

A Total of 35 seniors participated in the classes.

Transition Services for Youth

Transition services for youth involve developing collaborative relationships with area schools and community agencies in order to assist young adults/students who have physical or developmental disabilities, have mental health or substance abuse disorders and are in need of long-term care. Transition services assist students and their families in accessing information, options counseling, and connections to needed services. An ADRC Specialist is assigned to each client to take the lead in developing and promoting transition services. Transition activities in the 2022-2023 school year included:

- Ongoing provision of information and assistance to teachers (who are making requests on behalf of the students) via email, telephone, and in-person meetings.
- Provision of specialized options counseling to youth and their families when transitioning from children's disability services to adult disability services and benefits.
- Leadership and participation in monthly County Communities on Transitioning (CCOT) meetings. The Council members include high school teachers, representatives of community organizations, such as the Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Services, Southwest Technical College, CESA #3, and staff from other areas of Health and Human Services, such as Children with Disabilities staff.
- Ongoing outreach to all area schools.

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Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support Program (AFCSP)

The Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support Program was established by the Legislature in 1985 under Wisconsin Statutes and is implemented in accordance with administrative rule HFS 68. The program funding supports the entire family of a person with irreversible dementia so that caregivers can continue to provide home and community-based care. There is required financial eligibility determination and a maximum household ability to pay determination.

In 2023, Richland County Health and Human Services received \$5532. The funding was used to provide information, assistance, supportive care services to Richland County families, and conduct outreach and education to the community.

Dementia Care Specialist

The Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) is a person employed by the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Eagle Country's Regional Office who is responsible for assisting individuals and families living with dementia to continue to be active in their community and remain in their homes for as long as they are able. The DCS also ensures the ADRC staff are knowledgeable about dementia and are prepared to meet the needs of the people they serve in a supportive, helpful manner.

- **Individual Consultations:** Individuals and their families plan for their future by providing information on what to expect, decisions they may want to consider in advance and resources available to support individuals living with these changes.
- **Dementia Live:** The Dementia Live experience gives participants an idea of what it is like to have dementia. This is done by altering their senses and providing them with tasks to do in a controlled setting. In just 15 minutes participants gain greater awareness and understanding of the daily struggles affecting persons with dementia.

In 2023, Dementia Live was provided to local banks, HHS staff, local EMS, Sherriff's Department, Richland Center Police Department and individual families.



AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

The Richland County Transportation Program

In 2023 the Richland County Transportation program saw a large increase in need for transportation including medically necessary, food security, social recreation, personal business and quality of life trips. The Transportation program has four main services it provides including the driver escort program, public bus routes, public bus grocery routes and on-demand wheelchair transportation to medical appointments. The public bus routes are designed to provide transportation to rural residents and bordering communities in an effort to connect them with Richland Center and surrounding counties. The driver escort program provides door-to-door transportation service to the elderly and disabled community members of Richland County to medical appointments within an 85-mile radius.

- **Richland County Public Transportation & Lift Vehicle Transportation:** In 2023, the Richland County Public Transportation and Lift Vehicle Transportation programs had four temporary casual drivers who provided a total of 1498 trips.
- **Richland County Driver Escort Program:** In 2023, the Driver Escort Program had 20 volunteer drivers providing a total of 4049 one-way trips traveling 154,986 miles. Volunteer drivers donated a total of 5488 hours of their time.

National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP)

The National Family Caregivers Support Program was established as an amendment to the Older Americans Act in 2000. Funding support in 2023 totaled \$12,636 to provide five basic components under the program:

- Information to Caregivers about available services
- Assistance in gaining access to support services
- Individual counseling, advice on organization of support groups, and caregiver training
- Respite care
- Supplemental services to complement the care provided by caregivers

Use of these funds is less restricted with minimal guidelines that allow for more generalized family caregiver support. Possible uses include support services for grandparents and other relative caregivers of children 18 and under, older individuals providing care to persons with developmental disabilities and family caregivers of older persons age 60 and over.

In 2023, the funds supported 33 local families, provided assistance through the ADRC and subsidized some transportation needs for caregiver families.

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AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

Senior Nutrition Program

In May 2023, the Richland County Nutrition Program moved to the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Eagle Country Richland County Office. Since the population served and other Older American Programs are under the ADRC of Eagle Country it was an easy transition to also take on the Elder Nutrition Program.

Goals of the Richland County Senior Nutrition Program are to reduce hunger and food insecurity, promote socialization of older individuals and promote the health and well-being of older individuals. Richland County has three active meal sites and delivers meals to homebound individuals from two of those three locations. In the spring of 2023, the Request for Proposals (RFP) process was completed, resulting in a change in vendors for the program.

For the 2023 year, 3 meal sites operated with congregate dining at each location:

- **Richland Center:** The Grab N' Go program still operated at the Richland Center Site and has good attendance for this service as well as congregate meals, averaging 5-10 Grab N'Go meals and 15-20 Congregate meals daily. Meals on Wheels continued to be provided M-W-F's from the Richland Center location. During 2023 approximately 90-110 hot home delivered meals were provided each M-W-F. Frozen meals were offered for individuals who were in need of meals 5-7 days per week.
- **Cazenovia:** In 2023 20-25 individuals were provided congregate meals every Wednesday, and 10 home delivered meals each day delivery is offered.
- **Rockbridge:** In 2023, there was an increase in attendance, and the site remained open 3 days per week. It is hoped that the partnership of the Senior Nutrition Program with Bethlehem Lutheran Church will bring a variety of benefits including bridging the gap between generations.

The Senior's Farmers' Market Nutrition Program operates June through September, offering vouchers valued at \$35 to low-income older residents to purchase fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs from certified farmers.

In 2023, Richland County was allocated 196 sets of vouchers, of which 189 were utilized



ECONOMIC SUPPORT

ECONOMIC SUPPORT UNIT

Mission Statement

The Richland County Health and Human Services Economic Support Unit believes that all persons requesting our assistance have the right to be treated with respect, dignity and confidentiality. Our Mission is to provide all individuals within the Capital Consortium access to services needed to achieve economic stability within the programs we administer, including referrals to other appropriate agencies.

Overview

Income Maintenance Consortiums have been around since 2012. Richland County is a member of the Capital Consortium, which also includes Adams, Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Juneau, Sauk and Sheboygan. Richland County ESS (Economic Support Specialists) handle cases from all of these counties. There is a large number of programs administered by the unit, including:

- FoodShare
- Wisconsin Shares/Child Care Subsidy
- BadgerCare Plus
- Caretaker Supplement/CTS
- Medicaid for Elderly, Blind, Disabled
- Day Care Certification
- Program Integrity, Fraud and Front End Investigations

Economic Support Specialists

In 2015, the consortium was looking to increase the number of Economic Support Specialists (ESS) and chose to have them hired by Richland County. This brought eight additional ESS positions, as well as one Lead Worker position into the community. The unit currently has thirteen Economic Support Specialists, one Lead Worker, and one Manager. All thirteen specialists handle calls on the Call Center, and based on the number of workers in Richland County, the unit has a goal to handle 8.9% of all call center calls. That goal was exceeded 2023!

Total Calls Handled by the Consortium in 2023	Total Calls Handled by Richland County ESS:	Percentage of Calls Handled by Richland County ESS:
313,962	32,293	9.4%



ECONOMIC SUPPORT

In addition to handling calls on the Call Center, Economic Support Specialists (ESS), manage a caseload. Currently, a Family ESS averages 730 cases each while the Elderly, Blind, and Disabled ESS averages 700 cases each. Casework consists of processing applications, renewals, six-month report forms (SMRFs) for FoodShare, processing documents, discrepancies, alerts, and ACCESS Change Reports. Several tasks are required for each of these processes. For example, there are several tasks required for each Application that is processed.

Total Tasks Handled by Consortium in 2023	Total Tasks Handled by Richland County ESS in 2023	Percentage of Tasks Handled by Richland County ESS in 2023
1,169,671	107,574	9.1%

Economic Support Specialists (ESS) have 30 days to process an application. The benchmark for application processing timeliness is 95%. This means at least 95% of applications for FoodShare, BadgerCare, and Caretaker Supplement/CTS are completed within those 30 days. The Capital Consortium processed a total of 71,346 applications in 2023 with a timeliness rate of 98.18%. Richland County processed 5,683 of those applications with a timeliness rate of 98.74%. Richland County ESS work hard to meet and exceed the benchmarks set by the state.

In addition to their regular daily tasks, each Economic Support Specialist takes one to two days a month to be the unit contact person for agency staff, county staff, and the community. In 2023, we averaged about 40 contacts per month.

2023 Population of Richland County 2023	2023 Richland County Residents Receiving Economic Independence Assistance	2023 % of Richland County Population Receiving Economic Independence Assistance
17,014	4,895	28.7%

The following link will give you more information on what an Economic Support Specialist does. <https://wchsa.org/economic-support-staff>

FoodShare

In 2023, the average number of cases open for Foodshare in Richland County was 1,198, and 372,086 for the entire State of Wisconsin. The FoodShare program brought \$4,379,474 into Richland County's economy, for an average of \$364,956 per month. In 2023, \$1,497,926,181 of Foodshare benefits were paid out to Wisconsin residents, for an average of \$124,827,182 per month.



ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Year:	Total Number of Recipients (unduplicated) in Richland County:	Adults:	Children:	Number of Assistance Groups:
2023	3,250	2,092	1,186	1,671
2022	3,248	2,128	1,158	1,679

Year:	Total Number of Recipients (unduplicated) in Wisconsin:	Adults:	Children:	Number of Assistance Groups:
2023	930,518	581,116	360,327	492,517
2022	938,312	586,082	362,638	495,543

The following link will give you more information on the FoodShare program, including income limits. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/index.htm>

Medicaid (Including BadgerCare and Elderly, Blind Disabled Medicaid)

Richland County ESS enrolled as many as 15,142 people into the Medicaid program in 2023. Of those, 4,212 were Richland County residents. In the 2022 calendar year, the most recent data available, Medicaid expenditures paid on behalf of Richland County residents (including EBD & Long Term Care programs) totaled \$43,665,499. In 2021, that amount was \$38,387,662.

The following link will provide more information on BadgerCare Plus. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/badgercareplus/index.htm> .

The following link will provide more information on Medicaid. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid/index.htm> .

Caretaker Supplements/CTS

Caretaker Supplement (CTS) is a cash benefit for parents who get SSI payments and who meet program rules.

In 2023, 12 Richland County children received \$29,495 in assistance.

The following link will provide more information on Caretaker Supplements/CTS. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/ssi/caretaker.htm> .



ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Wisconsin SHARES/Child Care Subsidy

This program assists parents with paying for quality child care while they are participating in an approved activity.

Number of participating families in 2023:	Number of children served:	Total benefits utilized:
24	44	\$121,382.05

The following link will provide more information on Wisconsin SHARE/Child Care Subsidy.
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare>.

Program Integrity, Front End Investigations and Fraud

Richland County continues to create a consistent and timely approach to program integrity by sub-contracting with Dane County. Dane County has full-time staff and resources dedicated to this department. Economic Support Specialists make referrals in the BRITS system. The Dane staff will work those referrals and, if appropriate, overpayment, repayment, and/or sanctions will be established. Referrals could even be made to the district attorney for prosecution.

In 2023, 35 fraud or overpayment referrals were created on Richland County residents. Of those referrals, overpayments in the amount of \$31,328 were established.

The following link to the Office of the Inspector General will provide more information on program integrity. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/oig/index.htm>

Daycare Certification

The Richland County Economic Support Unit is responsible for certifying day care facilities. There were no certified day care providers in Richland County in 2023. (There are currently 8 licensed facilities.)

The following link will provide more information on Child Care Regulation.
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation>.



CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES UNIT

CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES UNIT

Mission Statement

Richland County Children's Services works with local children ranging in age from birth to at least eighteen years of age, in some circumstances it may be longer. We interact and support families through four individual program initiatives, all mandated through the State departments of Children & Families, Health Services, and Corrections.

Those four programs are as follows:

- Child Protective Services
- Youth Justice
- Foster Care and Kinship Care
- Independent Living

Child Protective Services

Children's Protective Services (CPS) is a key component of the Child Welfare system in Richland County. CPS involvement is warranted when there is a referral indicating a child may be unsafe, abused or neglected, or at risk of maltreatment. CPS identifies and addresses underlying family conditions that make children unsafe or at risk of maltreatment and implements a variety of safety plans with families in attempts of mitigating concerns by the least restrictive means possible. CPS workers in Richland County are required to follow strict laws and standards when determining if CPS intervention is warranted.

2023 CPS Reports	
Reports Received	275
Alleged Victims	436
Initial Assessments	61
Child Welfare Reports	79
Child Welfare Cases Opened	52



CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES UNIT

Child Welfare Model for Practice:

1. **Trust** – CPS workers approach complex family situations with honesty and integrity to support positive change.
2. **Engagement** – CPS established relationships with families through collaboration, empathy and partnership. The voices of families are included and welcomed in planning.
3. **Accountability** – We are accountable for the children, youth, and families in our community and are responsible for providing trauma-informed, culturally sensitive services. It is our job to learn, self-correct, innovate, and work towards positive outcomes.
4. **Trauma-Informed Practices** – CPS workers understand the impact of trauma on children and families and recognizes that practice is most effective when trauma is considered.
5. **Respect** – We acknowledge the worth, ideas and experience of every person and family system.
6. **Culturally Responsible** – We seek to reduce all biases and disparities at the individual, agency, and system level and treat clients with fairness and equity and serve them within the context of their identity, family, community, tribe, history, culture and traditions.
7. **Workforce Support** – The system promotes teaming amongst workers, supports professional development and seeks to ensure the safety of all workers and provides support to address secondary trauma.
8. **Family Centered** – Workers engage with families with a strengths-based perspective, supports teaming and advocate for appropriate services and supports to meet the needs of families, youth, and caregivers. Families and youth are the drivers for change and are empowered to make decisions with the recognition that they are the experts on their needs.



CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES UNIT

Youth Justice (Juvenile Justice)

Youth Justice (also known as Juvenile Justice) is the second component of the local Child Welfare system, which serves children who are 17 years of age or younger, who have been alleged to have violated laws. The focus of interventions is to interrupt destructive, delinquent behavior and also prevent youth from ending up in the adult prison system in the future. Services traditionally provided include: processing juvenile referrals, making recommendations to the court, case management and service coordination, collection and distribution of restitution, electronic monitoring, and reunification for youth who have been placed out of the home.

In 2023, there were 25 Youth Justice Referrals, 7 cases ended up with Supervision and Services, 4 cases that were pending in the court process at the end of the year.

There is a new vision for Youth Justice being implemented at the state level which encompasses a vision for accountability of youth rather than on punishment. This movement stems from recent research that indicates traditional sanctions such as sending youth to secure detention, often increases recidivism and pulls them deeper into the system. Under the new vision, the needs of victims are taken into account and clearly addressed, and stakeholders such as social workers and judges share an understanding of accountability that truly allows youth to take account for, and learn from their mistakes. Accountability for youth includes: repairing harm, opportunity to learn and grow, engagement in the process rather than simply the outcome, building youth support systems. As part of this program Child and Youth Services staff have begun to be trained in an evidence based assessment and planning tool (YASI-Youth Assessment Screening Instrument). The department is further working with ADA Amy Forehand and Judge Lisa McDougal to develop a protocol and procedure to utilize this tool to assess recidivism risk of youth and develop case planning that addresses specific identified needs of the youth involved in the Youth Justice System.

YES (Youth Empowerment Services)

One particular effort in Richland County to support youth and provide restorative justice opportunities is our YES program. YES provides youth with opportunities to develop life skills and supportive relationships with peers and adults. Participating youth share their collective energy and creativity in completing projects that benefit our community and explore topics such as self-esteem, citizenship, and cooperation.

221 West Seminary Street • Richland Center, WI • 53581

Phone: (608) 647-8821 Fax: (608) 647-6611 E-Mail: rchhs@co.richland.wi.us



CHILD & YOUTH SERVICES UNIT

Foster Care, Kinship Care, Subsidized Guardianship

CPS tries to keep families together whenever possible and works hard to make in-home safety plans. When it is not possible to do so however, children need sensitive and caring alternate caregivers to support the family through transitions, separations and reunifications. The CPS unit in Richland County licenses level 1 and level 2 foster homes and supports an array of relative or kinships homes. Richland County utilizes relative placements as much as possible. We conduct diligent outreach to relatives when a child is placed out of their home. We support these alternate caregivers with the training and support from our Foster and Kinship Coordinator.

Guardianship is a legal permanency option for children placed in out of home care through the child welfare system. A caregiver who is appointed guardian of a child by the court has the duty and authority to make important legal decisions for the child without severing the child's legal relationship to their parents and other family members. Subsidized guardianship supports the legal permanence option of guardianship and allows the guardian to continue receiving a monthly payment to offset the costs of caring for the child.

Richland County receives a small stipend to help youth who age out of care to achieve independence post 18 years. In 2015, the state began assuming responsibilities for this activity statewide by regions. In 2016, Richland County relinquished activity and funding to the State and no longer provides this service locally. Our regional services are delivered out of Platteville through a private partnership contracted by the state.



PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Overview

2023 was a year of restructure and resilience for the Public Health Unit, as they experienced a year of significant staffing changes. With the retirement of a tenured health officer, an additional staff nurse, as well as an environmental health consultant, public health suffered a deficit of institutional knowledge & skills. The remaining staff nurse assumed the interim Health Officer role for the public health unit and was eventually appointed to the permanent position. Fortunately, nursing duties continued for some specific services such as administering vaccines, TB skin tests, and medications for latent TB infection (LTBI) by the public health officer/nurse and another registered nurse in the agency, whose primary role is providing psychiatric nursing services. MOU agreements with two neighboring counties were developed to ensure delivery of other mandated services such as communicable disease surveillance, animal bites, and immunization services.

Due to unsuccessful attempts to fill the vacant public health nurse positions, a new Public Health Specialist position was created and filled by two qualified candidates who began work in October 2023. A nurse was contracted with to conduct mass vaccination flu clinics in the Richland County schools. Despite initial challenges coordinating these clinics, there was a slight increase in the overall number of children vaccinated against influenza. Sincere appreciation is extended to all of the staff working in or assisting the Public Health unit during this year of transition.

On a positive note, the Public Health Emergency Order ended in May of 2023 with a shift back to surveillance of communicable disease, in which the number of reported COVID cases and requirements for follow up decreased significantly. Although COVID vaccine demand decreased for several months, Wisconsin Department of Health Services implemented the Bridge Access Program (BAP), to ensure that COVID vaccines would remain available to uninsured and underinsured adults beginning in the fall. COVID vaccines were also approved to be provided as a VFC (Vaccine for Children) program vaccine and public health was able to secure the Pfizer COVID vaccine product once again for all age groups and continues to keep this product on hand.



PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Immunizations

Richland County Public Health staff follow guidance provided by the State of Wisconsin Immunization Program to provide life-saving immunizations to eligible Richland County families. Dr. Neil Bard serves as the public health medical advisor for standing orders, and immunizations offered by public health are provided under the Vaccine for Children (VFC) and Vaccines for Adults (VFA) programs. These programs focus on providing immunizations to uninsured or underinsured families, including Medicaid eligible, American Indian, or Alaskan Native client populations. Additionally, in the fall influenza immunizations are made available for the entire community. All ACIP recommended vaccines continue to be offered to qualifying families.

Immunization	2022	2023	Immunization	2022	2023
COVID Pfizer Bivalent 12+	299	-	Polio	2	1
COVID Pfizer 5-11yrs	17	-	Prevnar	3	2
COVID Pfizer 12+	315	-	Td	6	4
COVID Pfizer 6mos-4yrs	8	1	Varicella	5	5
COVID Pfizer Bivalent Booster	6	3	Menactra	-	4
DTaP	4	1	Td-Pertussis (Tdap)	11	8
Hepatitis A	7	4	Covid-19	719	-
Hepatitis B	6	1	HPV (Gardasil)	1	2
Adult Hepatitis B	-	-	RotaTeq	-	2
Hib	1	-	DTaP-Hib-Polio (Pentacel)	2	2
Influenza	534	457	DTaP-Polio (KINRIX)	-	-
MMR	2	3	Proquad (MMRV)	1	3
Pneumonia	-	-			

Total Immunizations	2022	2023
	1,949	503

In July of 2023, staff successfully completed a scheduled visit by the Wisconsin Immunization Program, ensuring continuation of immunization services for Richland County Residents including:

- Vaccine for Children Immunization Clinics
- Vaccine clinics for local school districts
- Vaccines to area care facilities serving the elderly & Disabled populations



PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Communicable Disease Investigation & Follow-Up

In Wisconsin reportable diseases are divided into three categories. In Wisconsin reportable diseases are divided into three categories. Category I diseases are considered to be of urgent Public Health importance and are to be reported immediately to local Public Health. Category II diseases must be reported to local Public Health within 72 hours of the identification of a case or suspected case. Category III disease (HIV and AIDS) is to be reported to the state epidemiologist within 72 hours of identification of a case or suspected case.

Specific infection control measures such as isolation, quarantine, and personal protection are common methods utilized to prevent the spread of communicable disease. Public Health staff provide investigation and follow up on communicable disease reports on Richland County residents.

Disease Group	2022	2023	Disease Group	2022	2023
Babesiosis	1	2	Influenza	39	87
Campylobacteriosis	8	6	Invasive Streptococcal Disease (Groups A&B)	2	3
Carbapenemase producing organisms	1	0	Metal Poisoning (non-lead)	3	1
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning	4	6	MRSA	0	3
Chlamydia Trachomatis Infection	38	38	Mycobacterial Disease (Nontuberculous)	2	2
Coronavirus	2086	465	Not Reportable	0	1
Cryptosporidiosis	4	2	Pathogenic E. Coli	0	67
Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis	9	2	Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	7	10
Environmental & Occupational Lung Diseases	4	0	RSV	0	1
Giardiasis	1	1	Salmonellosis	3	1
Gonorrhea	8	6	Shigellosis	1	0
Haemophilus Influenza Invasive Disease	1	0	Streptococcus Pneumoniae Invasive Disease	3	5
Hepatitis B	0	1	Tuberculosis, Class A or B	1	0
Hepatitis C	2	3	Tuberculosis, Latent Infection (LTBI)	1	0
Histoplasmosis	1	0	Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci	1	0
			Yersiniosis	1	0

Total Diseases	2022: 2,282	2023: 759
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PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

TB Skin Test

Public Health provides a comprehensive tuberculosis (TB) prevention and control program including TB skin testing. TB skin tests are most often completed as a pre-employment requirement, but may be requested or recommended as follow-up to a potential exposure.

135 total TB skin tests were provided by Public Health in 2023

TB Skin Dispensary

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services Tuberculosis (TB) Dispensary Program reimburses local health departments for certain medical services provided to TB cases, suspects, contacts, and Latent TB Infections (LTBIs). The goal of the program is to assure health care service to patients/clients in Richland County that have been diagnosed with TB infection or disease, regardless of ability to pay. The Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services Tuberculosis Program provides oversight and consultation to local health departments in the management of confirmed or suspected TB and LTBI cases.

In 2023, the Wisconsin DHS TB dispensary program was accessed 4 times for dispensing of medications in Richland County; 3 times for new clients (the fourth client finished treatment in the beginning of 2023). Richland County Public Health nursing staff provided direct observation therapy (DOT) medication services to all 3 clients in the clinic setting, each over the course of approximately 12 weeks. There were 2 “suspect” cases of LTBI reported, and one determined to be “not a case”, for a total of 6 LTBI cases requiring public health follow up and some level of case management in 2023.

Rabies Prevention & Control

Public Health works with the Richland County Sheriff’s Department, the Richland Center Police Department, the Richland County District Attorney and the Corporation Counsel, as well as local veterinary services and animal shelters to assure that procedures outlined in the Rabies Prevention and Control Policy are followed when there is an animal bite to a human. When Public Health receives a bite order from Law Enforcement, public health staff contact both the animal owner, to assure the owner understands the requirements for quarantine and vaccination of the biting animal, and the victim to assure understanding of potential consequences of an animal bite and the importance of medical attention after an animal bite. Once the quarantine is complete or a rabies test result is obtained, Public Health contacts the person who was bitten to report the outcome.

221 West Seminary Street • Richland Center, WI • 53581

Phone: (608) 647-8821 Fax: (608) 647-6611 E-Mail: rchhs@co.richland.wi.us



PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

In 2023 staff provided follow up on a total of 67 cases for rabies control

In 2023, public health staff authorized fee exempt testing for 17 specimens, which were primarily dogs, but also included bats, squirrels, goats, cats, and raccoons. These specimens were submitted to the Wisconsin State lab of Hygiene, or WSLH, and there were no positive rabies cases that resulted from those tests.

Maternal Child Health Program

Richland County Public Health provides Maternal Child Health (MCH) home visits as part of the Wisconsin Healthiest Families statewide initiative that strives to improve systems to address family supports, child development, mental health and safety and injury prevention. In 2023, there were 7 MCH referrals received by Richland County Public Health from area healthcare providers. 1 client accepted a home visit from Public Health, with additional phone consultation and follow up provided to other referred clients. Richland County Public Health also provided information in birth packets sent to 151 families which included brochures from SWCAP WIC, Birth to 3, and information on milestone developments, immunizations, and car seat safety.

Loan Closet

The Richland County Public Health Department has a supply of medical equipment to be provided for short-term use for our area residents. A small deposit is required which is returned when the resident no longer needs the equipment.

In 2023, the loan closet rented out 324 items throughout the year.

Richland Community Free Clinic

The Free Clinic provides primary health care to people and is staffed by medical professionals and community volunteers on Tuesday mornings at The Richland Hospital. Public Health continued to assist at the Free Clinic until March of 2023. With the abrupt decrease in staff capacity, a decision was made to offer support from ADRC staff to assist with sharing resources to clients in the absence of public health nurses. In the fall, public health nursing staff were able to offer a vaccine clinic specific for flu shots during the flu season to those that were eligible.



PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Environmental Health

Richland County was part of a five county consortium through the end of 2023 to provide environmental health services to residents of Richland County. The Grant County Health Department was the lead agency and fiscal agent for the Environmental Health Consortia and employed one Registered Sanitarian who was the Environmental Health Coordinator for all five counties, which included Grant, Iowa, Lafayette, Vernon, and Richland. The Grant County Environmental Health Coordinator assisted with investigation and follow-up of human health hazard complaints and coordinated environmental health programs listed below, with the assistance of public health staff accompanying on some home visits.

2023 Environmental Health Contacts		2023 Environmental Health Home Visits	
Lead	18	Lead	3
Radon	30	Radon	1
Water	12	Water	0
Asbestos	9	Asbestos	1
Solid Waste	42	Solid Waste	9
Air Quality	28	Air Quality	3
Sewer	6	Fit Testing	2
Animal/Pest	14	Animal/Pest	0
Housing	41	Housing	13
Total	200	Total	32

Private Well Testing

Water sampling kits are available free of charge for testing private wells for bacteria, nitrates, fluoride, and metals for families with new babies. Water test kits are also available fee-for-service for anyone who wants to test their private well water supply. Public Health has test kits available at the agency and the fees are sent directly to the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene with the sample. The Public Health department is happy to help explain the results of the water tests or consult on concerns related to water quality.

Radon Test Kits

Radon is a radioactive gas that comes from the natural decay of uranium, which is found in nearly all soils. Radon typically moves up through the ground to the air above and seeps into homes through cracks and other holes in foundations. Radon can get trapped in homes where it



PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

can build up and have a negative impact on health. The Public Health Department has free radon kits to test for this gas.

In 2023, 55 Radon test kits were distributed and 34 test kits returned.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

Lead poisoning in children can be difficult to detect, resulting in devastating long term effects including reduced IQ and attention span, learning disabilities, developmental delays and other health and behavioral issues. Preventing exposure requires preventing children from coming into contact with lead hazards by identifying and repairing the hazards.

Children are screened by the collection of a capillary blood sample which is sent to the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) for analysis. Public Health Nurses and the Environmental Health Coordinator make home visits to provide education and assessment of the child's environment for lead hazards.

Property owners are responsible to comply with lead hazard reduction measures ordered by Public Health. Lead poisoning screening and prevention activities provide essential tools to identify risk and eliminate exposure.

131 Richland County children were screened for lead exposure in 2023 with 12 reported cases of elevated blood lead test results.

Preparedness & Response

In the fall of 2023, preparedness/response efforts shifted away from COVID-19 response. Richland County Public Health is a member of the Region #5 South Central Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (SCWIHERC) which participates in trainings/education pertaining to preparedness & response services and capabilities.

The mass immunization influenza clinics offered in the Richland county schools in October of 2023 served as an emergency preparedness functional exercise and was successfully completed by all public health staff within their respective roles.