

2024 Annual Report



Community Services Building

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

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

On behalf of the Community and Health Services Committee and agency staff, I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual Report. This document contains program and statistical information related to services; listing of our associated committees, boards and contracted providers; and financial data related to our budget.

In 2024, one focus for all full time Richland County staff, including HHS staff, was the Compensation and Classification Study. All HHS employees reviewed their job duties, completed a "Position Analysis Questionnaire" and once an updated job description was completed, reviewed it for accuracy. This took the employees time to complete, on top of continuing their day-to-day tasks. This was a positive step the county took to acknowledge the work that employees do and ensure accurate compensation.

Our Behavioral Health unit continued to find stability in staffing. Although there was turnover, it was minimal and did not disrupt the needs of the unit. The unit also transitioned the supervisor for Birth to Three and CLTS to the Behavioral Health Unit Supervisor. This put her in a role where additional support could be provided to other programs in the unit. This was a positive transition for the unit and the agency. Most staff in this unit have been hired in the past couple of years. With the leadership and guidance of the seasoned staff, the unit continues to grow in their ability to provide high quality services to the community.

Economic Support Specialists completed the second half of Medicaid Unwinding in 2024. This was over a 12-month process where workers had two sets of rules to follow. Upon the completion of Unwinding, the staff were able to begin to work under one set of rules and begin to have time to breathe between calls. Staff from Richland County did a great job during this time and showed their professionalism when working under high stress.

Our Public Health Unit completed their 140 Review in 2024. This was a successful process for them and at the end of the process, continued their Level II health department status. This was a lot of work but also an opportunity to review their strengths and opportunities for improvement. Public health also had relative stability in staffing for 2024. This has allowed the unit to continue to grow and gain confidence in the work they are doing.

ADRC saw staffing changes in 2024. For many years, they had stability in staffing. The unit showed they can adjust to changes and come out stronger than before. In their unit of 9, they had changes in three positions. The changes were due to retirements and an employee promotion. Staff feel fortunate to be in the unit and often want to stay, so change happening is rare. The ADRC also completed their 3-year aging plan in 2024. This provides goals for those aging in the community.

Our Child and Youth Services found success in 2024 with some of their placements. Four children who had been in out of home placement found stability through either reunification or permanency. Another 2 found permanency in early 2025. Out of these children, 5 had been in care an extended amount of time. The entire unit worked together to achieve permanency for these children.

Our Administrative and Financial Services unit rolled with the changes presented to them in 2024. One of the confidential administrative assistants took another job in the department. This allowed the creation of an additional fiscal specialist for the second half of the year. This was done to allow someone retiring in 2025 to train their replacement. This is rare to happen and was seen by all as a great benefit to the agency. This unit continues to support the entire agency with a positive attitude.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Reflecting back on 2024, I feel very fortunate to be in the role I am in and be a part of Richland County. Staff here are dedicated to the people they serve. They understand the mission and live it daily.

As you review this report, I hope you will not 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.

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BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Boards & Committees (as of 12/31/2024)

Richland County Community & Health Services Standing Committee

Ingrid Glasbrenner, Chair

Michelle Harwick
Sandra Kramer
Daniel McGuire
Mary Miller

Cynthia Chicker
Francis Braithwaite
Dr. Jerel Berres

Marty Brewer (1947-2025) proudly served the citizens of Richland County until his passing in January of 2025. Health & Human Services expresses its sincere appreciation for his many years of dedication and service.

Aging & Disability Resource Center/Aging Unit Advisory Committee

Kevin Koester
Terry Berg
Marty Brewer

Larry Engel
David Scribbins
Linda Symons

Nutrition Advisory Council

Roseanne Knower
Lee Van Landuyt

Linda Symons
Virginia Wiedenfeld

Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) Coordination Committee

Laurie Couey
Isabela Candelaria
Jennifer Ward
William Rezin
Dawn Greeno

Kiah Holtzman
Dr. Jerel Berres
Kevin Schmidt
Megan Johnson



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

Transportation Coordinating Committee

Sandra Kramer, Chair

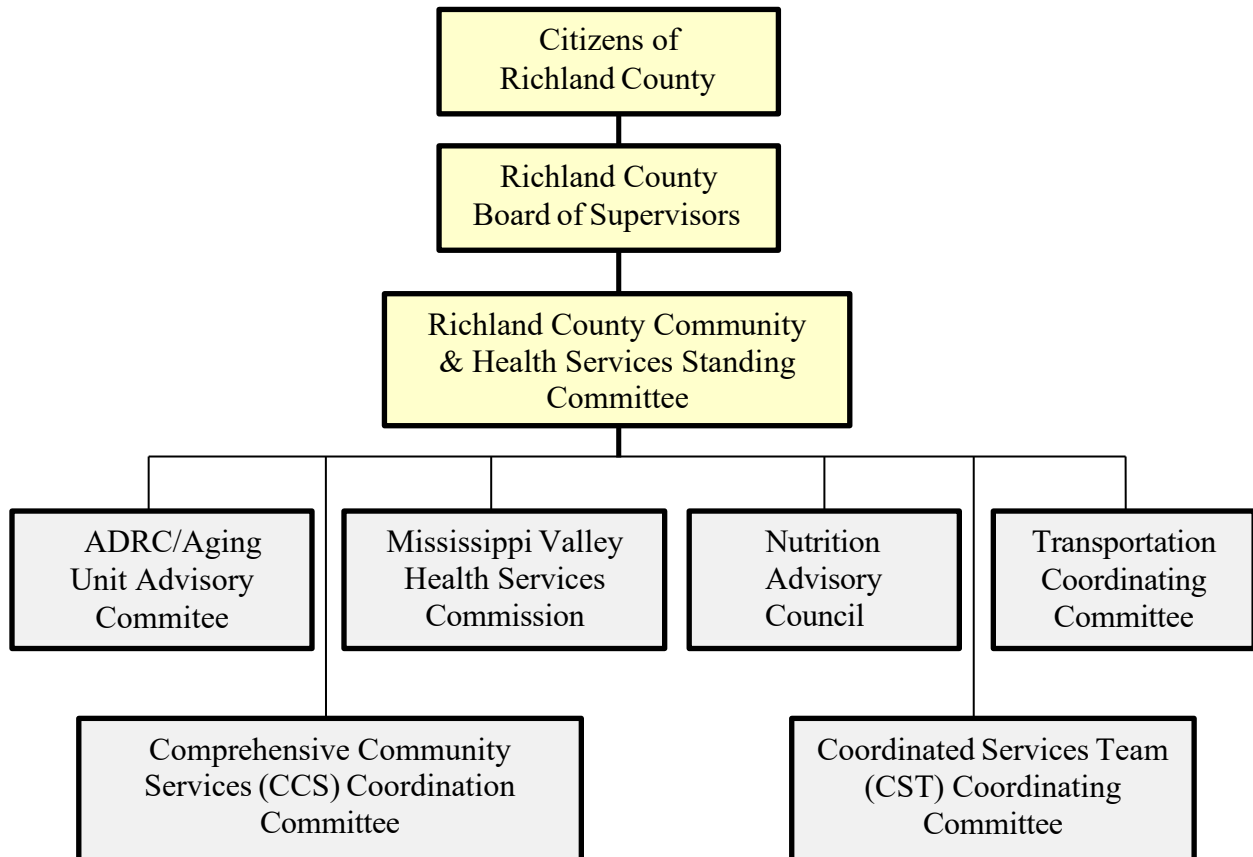
David Scribbins
Sandra McKittrick
Aaron Gray
Cindy Riley

Jesse Nelson
Darin Steinmetz
Linda Symons
Jeremy Walsh



BOARD ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

BOARD ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



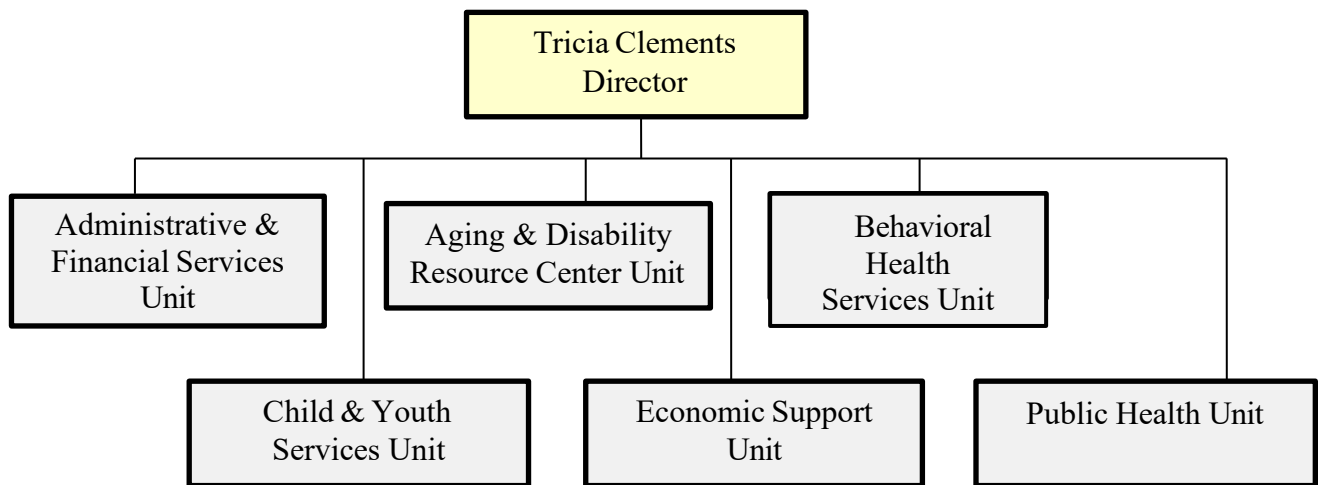
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UNIT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

UNIT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



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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 and 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
- Records Request Processing

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 is also what makes this team successful when they experience change. In 2024, there was change in this unit when one of the Confidential Administrative Secretaries took a new position within the agency. Therefore, some of those duties had to be absorbed by the one remaining Confidential Administrative Secretary until a decision was made with regards to hiring a replacement. Processes were streamlined and efficiencies were sought out in the meantime.

And as always, the team looked at the organizational structure of the unit and determined that the vacant Confidential Administrative Secretary position should be replaced, instead, with a Fiscal Specialist. This was in anticipation of a retirement that was to happen by the end of 2024. This new position was filled in late August 2024, and by the time the retirement occurred, we were ready to provide uninterrupted service going into the new year.

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ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

Along with these staffing changes, back-up at the Main Front Desk became more complicated. With that said, a full-time Secretary will be brought on in 2025 for more depth at our Main Front Desk. Phone calls and walk-ins have not slowed down over the years and the additional support throughout the agency is needed when you look at the contact numbers mentioned by other units.

In addition, in 2024, Administrative and Financial Services staff wanted to highlight the following activities:

- **ERP Pro 10:** In 2024, the county, with significant assistance from unit staff, began the work of transitioning to Tyler Technologies ERP Pro 10 financial software. This new software will replace an antiquated system in all things financial. Eventually, the new system will allow for efficiencies in Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Receipting, Financial Reporting, Budgeting, Payroll, and the hope is that it will be used to meet agency time tracking requirements as well. The complete roll-out of the system will happen in 2025.
- **Human Resources:** While Human Resources functions were not completely centralized in 2024 at the county level, there was a significant increase in the collaboration that occurs with unit staff and county administration staff in a variety of areas (e.g. the hiring process, payroll, and onboarding).
- **Electronic Health Record (EHR) System:** A full year of using the Engage module of the Behavioral Health Services Electronic Health Record (EHR) system improved efficiencies related to Main Front Desk support and document storage/filing.
- **Billing:** The switch to fully implement paperless EHR billing in order to complete more real-time billing continued in 2024.
- **Revenues:** Unit staff remained diligent in maximizing revenues by utilizing tracking and monitoring systems to their fullest in their billing practices for the plethora of Behavioral Health programs.
- **WIMCR:** All Administrative and Financial Services staff once again achieved success in WIMCR reporting that resulted in a positive revenue adjustment of over \$1,000,000 across multiple programs.
- **Financial Interviewing:** Our improved financial interviewing process 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. This data gathering reduces the number of denials from insurance companies for services provided. Since implementation, we went from writing off \$56,942 in 2022 to only \$16,127 in 2023 and \$17,979 in 2024.

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ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

2024 Financial Summary (Un-audited)

2024 Core Expenses

Expenses by Program	2024 Budget	Actual
Administrative Services		
Staff	\$562,081	\$598,492
Building & Operating Costs	\$334,082	\$271,944
Public Health		
Public Health	\$296,074	\$437,295
Aging & Disability Resource Center		
Elderly Services	\$357,460	\$370,187
Nutrition	\$304,954	\$286,293
Resource Center	\$450,815	\$419,817
Economic Support Unit		
ES Programs	\$1,079,618	\$957,247
Child & Youth Services		
Children & Youth Programs	\$717,186	\$627,720
CPS Contracted Services	\$79,923	\$71,114
Behavioral Health		
MH Outpatient/Crisis Services	\$769,538	\$620,602
AODA Outpatient	\$160,071	\$95,318
CCS	\$2,683,591	\$3,397,512
Adult Protective Services	\$137,834	\$77,937
Treatment Court	\$158,523	\$117,089
Birth to Three Program	\$212,118	\$222,049
Children with Disabilities	\$219,729	\$182,830
Total	\$8,523,598	\$8,753,446



ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

2024 Revenues

Revenue by Source	Actual
County Tax Levy	\$882,430
Medicaid/Medicare (Inc. WIMCR)	\$4,021,679
ARPA Funding	\$235,819
Other Funding	\$244,513
State-Base County Allocation	\$822,262
State-Categorical Programs	\$2,977,706
Total	\$9,184,409

End of Year Core Budget Balance

End of Year Core Budget Balance	+ \$430,963
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2024 Placement Expenses

Adult (Fund 54)	
Budget	\$705,000
Expenses	-\$947,204
Tax Levy	\$705,000
Other Revenue	\$248,736
Fund 54 Balance	\$6,532
Children (Fund 44)	
Budget	\$680,000
Expenses	-\$671,735
Tax Levy	\$680,000
Other Revenue	\$33,043
Fund 44 Balance	\$41,308

End of Year Placement Balance

End of Year Placement Balance	+ \$47,840
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ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES UNIT

2024 Health & Human Services Contracts (Over \$10,000)

• Annika Mersmann	\$18,958
• Arneson Counseling	\$69,729
• Children's Hospital of WI	\$105,431
• Community Care Resources	\$44,377
• Cornerstone Foundation	\$139,250
• Coulee Region Psychiatric Services	\$32,825
• Diane's Adult Family Home	\$93,855
• Driftless Counseling, LLC	\$1,049,455
• Forward Home for Boys	\$255,377
• Jessica Leinberger Counseling	\$22,225
• Logan James Herr Foundation, Inc.	\$16,550
• M Squared NC, LLC dba Action Fence	\$12,598
• Northwest Counseling & Guidance Clinic	\$86,880
• Premier Financial Management Services	\$18,724
• RTP (WI), S.C.	\$58,809
• Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative	\$62,830
• Shay Rehabilitation & Psych Services	\$208,388
• SW WI Workforce Development Board	\$118,702
• TLC Home Care, LLC	\$60,330
• Vista Care Wisconsin	\$446,910
• Dean Saner, Psy. D.	\$29,250
• Hailey Schneider	\$65,579
• Hansen Assessments	\$12,525
• Miramont Behavioral Health	\$20,749
• Options Lab	\$12,917
• Red Maple Consulting	\$129,043
• Roots Residential AFH	\$260,686
• Trempealeau County Health Care	\$28,151
• You Are Enough Counseling	\$96,541
• Moe's Transitional Living	\$65,801
• Fiscal Assistance, Inc.	\$79,972
• J&B Medical Supply	\$12,994
• St. Joseph Health Services	\$30,130
• Mazo Catering	\$137,828

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH 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 2024, Richland County Treatment Court served 7 people in Sobriety Court and 8 people in Drug Court. Sobriety Court had 5 graduations, and Drug Court had 2. There were 6 applications for Sobriety Court in 2024, and 11 for Drug Court.

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES UNIT

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 one therapist, a substance abuse counselor, a psychiatric nurse, a psychiatric nurse practitioner, a psychologist, and a psychiatrist. Our outpatient clinic also 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 2024, the Behavioral Health Clinic completed 63 Intoxicated Driver Assessments, 54 Mental Health Assessments, 32 Substance Abuse Assessments, 22 Psychological Evaluations, and 46 Psychiatric Assessments. 11 underage youth completed the Choices program.

Crisis

Crisis services are set up to give 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 2024, Northwest Connections had 379 crisis contacts and Richland County HHS Crisis Staff had 1088 crisis contacts, for a total of 1467.

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 2024, Richland County had 35 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 2024, there were 222 APS referrals.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH 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 multiple hours per week of treatment in their homes and the community.

In 2024, 76 consumers were served in CCS and 66 people were referred.

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 2024, 9 consumers received mental health residential services.

Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) Program

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 2024, 87 children were served in CLTS and 32 kids were referred.

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 2024, 49 children were served in BT3 and 43 kids were referred.

Coordinated Services Team (CST)

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

In 2024, 4 children were served in CST and 2 kids were referred.



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 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. In 2024, the Richland Center Office of the ADRC of Eagle Country processed 14,979 incoming contacts (phone calls or walk-in customers).



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 2024, ADRC Specialists received 4,721 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 2024, staff completed 85 Functional Screens and enrolled 79 customers into long-term care publicly funded programming.

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AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

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 2024, the Disability Benefit Specialist program assisted 142 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 \$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.

Elder 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, ongoing 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 2024, 39 people attended to learn how to navigate Medicare Programs and an additional 294 seniors received other assistance.

In 2024, the Elder Benefit Specialist Program provided a savings to 333 Richland County residents totaling \$1,369,462 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 46 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 2023-2024 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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AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

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 2024, Richland County Health and Human Services received \$7,161. 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. In 2024, the local DCS provided numerous services in partnership with local ADRC staff in Richland County.

- **Individual Consultations:** Assist 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. In 2024, 16 new individual caregivers and their families were served in Richland County in addition to 10 ongoing cases.
- **Dementia Live:** The Dementia Live experience gives participants an idea of what it is like to have any of the 100+ diseases that fall under the term “dementia” 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 2024, a public opportunity for Dementia Live was hosted in partnership with the Richland Hospital with 20 professional and family caregivers attending.

- **Dementia Capable Crisis Response Training:** As part of the DCS/ADRC contract, the DCS provides training to EMS/Law Enforcement staff on a more effective response and treatment to those living with dementia. In order to make Richland County “Dementia Capable”, the DCS and ADRC Staff trained 16 staff from a variety of departments.

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AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

- **Caregiver Support Groups:** Our Richland Caregiver Support Group served 12 local caregivers this past year, with attendance increasing. The Monday Coffee Connect caregiver support group, provided weekly online for the entire year, continued to serve caregivers across a 10 county region, with an average of 6 to 8 in attendance, increasing from last year. A new “Forget Me Not” support group started in December for those with early stage dementia. The group was started to give support and a voice to those suffering under the stigma of these diseases.
- **Memory Screens:** Memory Screens are conducted with any individual that expresses interest and who can also meet with the DCS to hear about Brain Health Education.

In May of 2024, A “Memory Screen Event” was held at the RockBridge Mealsite where 10 people completed a Mini-Cog or a MOCA test.

Richland County Transportation Program

In 2024, 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 2024, the Richland County Public Transportation and Lift Vehicle Transportation programs had four temporary casual drivers who provided a total of 1209 trips.
- **Richland County Driver Escort Program:** In 2024, the Driver Escort Program had 20 volunteer drivers providing a total of 4,006 one-way trips traveling 196,736 miles. Volunteer drivers donated a total of 5,602 hours of their time.

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AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

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 2024 totaled \$14,273 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 2024, the funds supported 26 local families, provided assistance through the ADRC and subsidized some transportation needs for caregiver families.

Elder Nutrition Program

The Richland County Elder Nutrition Program has goals in place to reduce hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, 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.

Volunteer drivers for Meals on Wheels Richland County gave 999 hours of their time. On-site volunteers gave 2,620 hours of their time which is a total of 3,619 hours from dedicated volunteers to our meals program. We currently have 3 businesses (Rockwell Automation, Community First Bank and Schreiber Food both East and West plants), 2 churches (St. Mary's and 1st Baptist), 13 individuals unassociated with an organization or church for which most are couples.

A total of 67 Meals on Wheels volunteers and 12 on-site volunteers dedicated their time to the meals program.

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AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

In 2024, the Richland County Nutrition Program served 16,768 home delivered meals and 7,905 senior dining site meals. There was an increase for both home-delivered meals and senior dining for the Elder Nutrition Program for the year.

In 2024 year, three meal sites operated with congregate dining at each location:

- **Richland Center Meal Site:** The Grab N' Go program continues to operate at the Richland Center site. The Site averaged 5-10 Grab N' Go meals and 15-25 Congregate meals daily. Meals on Wheel were provided five days per week from the Richland Center location. During 2024 approximately 330 hot home delivered meals were provided each week. Frozen meals were offered for individuals who were in need of meals 5-7 days per week.
- **Cazenovia:** In 2024, individuals were provided congregate meals every Wednesday, and 10 home delivered meals each day delivery is offered.
- **Rockbridge:** In 2024, there was an increase in attendance, and the site remained open 3 days per week. It is hoped that the partnership of the Elder 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 each year, offering vouchers valued at \$45 to low-income older residents to purchase fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs from certified farmers.

In 2024, Richland County was allocated 215 sets of vouchers, of which was reported to have a 79% redemption rate.



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 Consortia 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. In 2024 the unit had thirteen Economic Support Specialists, one Lead Worker, and one Manager. There was at least one vacant ESS position throughout the year. 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 2024!

Total Calls Handled by the Consortium in 2024	Total Calls Handled by Richland County ESS:	Percentage of Calls Handled by Richland County ESS:
300,001	31,892	10.6%



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
1,200,977	118,865	9.8%

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 84,275 applications in 2024 with a timeliness rate of 98.2%. Richland County processed 7,526 of those applications with a timeliness rate of 99.2%. 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 three days a month to be the unit contact person for agency staff, county staff, and the community. In 2024, we had a total of 1,021 contacts.

2024 Population of Richland County 2023	2024 Richland County Residents Receiving Economic Independence Assistance	2024 % of Richland County Population Receiving Economic Independence Assistance
18,052	5,345	29.6%

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

FoodShare

In 2024, the average number of cases open for Foodshare in Richland County was 1,189, and 370,134 for the entire State of Wisconsin. The FoodShare program brought \$3,919,488 into Richland County's economy, for an average of \$326,624 per month. In 2024, \$1,369,162,451 of Foodshare benefits were paid out to Wisconsin residents, for an average of \$114,096,871 per month. The following link will give you more information on the FoodShare program, including income limits. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/index.htm>



ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Medicaid (Including BadgerCare and Elderly, Blind Disabled Medicaid)

In the 2023 calendar year, the most recent data available, Medicaid expenditures paid on behalf of Richland County residents (including EBD & Long Term Care programs) totaled \$44,752,878. This was for 3,158 cases with a total of 5,477 individual recipients. In 2022, that amount was \$43,665,499 for 2,911 cases with a total of 5,102 individual recipients.

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 2024, 15 Richland County children received \$33,550 in assistance.

The following link will provide more information on Caretaker Supplements/CTS.

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/ssi/caretaker.htm> .

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 2024:	Number of children served:	Total benefits utilized:
38	70	\$202,262.44

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



ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Program Integrity, Front End Investigations and Fraud

Richland County continues to create a consistent and timely approach to program integrity by subcontracting 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 2024, 38 fraud or overpayment referrals were created on Richland County residents. Of those referrals, overpayments in the amount of \$9,278 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 in Richland County. This is not a part of the Capital Consortium. There were no certified day care providers in Richland County in 2024. (There are currently 7 licensed facilities with 1 temporarily closed.)

The following link will provide more information on Child Care Regulation. <https://def.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.

Overview

Child and Youth Services is a system that works to keep children safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. The goal of Child and Youth Services is to support parents/caregivers in making necessary changes so children are safe and protected in their homes.

Child Protective Services

Child Protective Services (CPS) is a key component of the Child Welfare system in Richland County. CPS involvement is warranted when there is a report received 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 statutes and standards when determining if CPS intervention is warranted.

*In 2024, 253 CPS reports were received and there were 408 alleged victims.
Of those reports, 71 were screened in for an Initial Assessment.*

Child Protective Services

Child Welfare/Services Reports is a way to provide services to families without formal intervention. These types of reports do not meet criteria for abuse or neglect but identify a need for additional assistance. This is a voluntary service we offer through Child and Youth Services.

*In 2024, 75 Child Welfare/Service reports were received.
Of those reports, 63 were screened in to offer services to families.*



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 2024, there were 31 Youth Justice Referrals. Of those referrals, 13 were counseled and closed, 16 resulted in a formal petition, and 2 cases were pending in the court process at the end of the year.

Youth Empowerment Services (YES)

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.

In 2024, there were 8 youth enrolled in the summer program.



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 in following the Putting Families First initiative. We support these alternate caregivers with the training and support from our Foster and Kinship Coordinator.

*In 2024, there were 0 foster homes licensed in Richland County.
Richland County currently has 0 licensed foster homes.
CYS has increased their outreach within the past year to try and increase interest
with foster care in Richland County.*

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.

*In 2024, CYS filed for 1 Guardianship and 2 Termination of Parental Rights (TPR).
There were 21 total ongoing Kinship and Non-subsidized Guardianships in 2024.
Of those, 3 closed (aged out and moved) and 18 remained open.
There are currently 3 total Subsidized Guardianships.*



PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Mission Statement

Working to Improve the well-being and quality of life of Richland County Residents.

Vision: A happy, healthy, and safe Richland County.

Core Values: Empathy, service, innovativeness, integrity, collaboration.

Overview

In 2024, the Public Health Unit successfully began implementation of the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), initiated the Lead-In-Water Testing & Remediation Initiative with one licensed childcare facility, increased vaccine doses for both Vaccine for Children & Adult programs, and increased the number TB skin tests administered. In March of 2024, we passed our DHS 140 review, highlighting the essential services we provide to the community, maintaining our status as a Level II health department.

We experienced employee turnover in 2024, including the departure of a tenured Registered Sanitarian who had previously provided the majority of environmental health case management for Richland County through the end of 2023. Our Public Health Unit is led by our local Health Officer, who is the Public Health Manager and is a BSN trained Registered Nurse. We have two Public Health Specialists, one of whom holds an MPH and is a Certified Health Education Specialist, while the other holds a BS in Sociology with experience in Crisis services. We also have a contracted Registered Nurse, BSN prepared, with former experience serving in a rural county Public Health Department.

Despite being a small health department, our public health staff display strong work ethic and are committed to preventing disease, and protecting and promoting the health of the community.

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PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Community Health Assessment (CHA) **Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)**

Either every 3 or 5 years, local health departments are required to provide a community health assessment (CHA) and community health improvement plan (CHIP) for the county. In May of 2024, RCHHS began implementation of their 2023-2027 CHIP via a CHIP Kickoff Meeting which brought together members of the community to discuss the CHIP's two priority areas, mental health and substance misuse. Attendees were invited to join workgroups, specifically the Partners for Prevention Alcohol Workgroup and/or the newly formed CHIP Mental Health Workgroup.

The CHIP Mental Health Workgroup has been meeting monthly since June of 2024 and is addressing the causal factors of mental health stigma and access to mental health services. A survey for local business owners was created and sent to over 40 businesses with 21 completing the survey. Of the 21 businesses that completed the survey, 16 were open to receive additional information and mental health resources were sent to each business to assist in addressing stigma and linking employees to local providers. Information on local resources was shared in a variety of settings including the WRCO Morning Show in May 2024, the National Night Out event in August 2024, and virtually via social media.

The collaborative Substance Misuse/P4P Alcohol Workgroup met 6 times in 2024, addressing social hosting, alcohol compliance checks, and promoting local event safety. The workgroup successfully collaborated with one local event to implement the evidence-based best practice of signage at events indicating that you must be 21 years or older to purchase alcohol, and that visibly intoxicated individuals will not be served. The signs were well received and the workgroup looks forward to expand outreach to other local events in 2025.

Preparedness & Response

Emergency Preparedness and Response remains an essential service of local health departments. 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.

Mass Immunization Influenza (Flu) vaccine clinics offered to the Richland County school districts each year serve as an emergency preparedness functional exercise. This was successfully completed by all public health staff within their respective roles in October of 2024. Among 4 school districts in Richland County, 164 total children were administered the 2024-2025 VFC influenza vaccine. In addition, Public Health staff were able to attend a Power Outage functional exercise along with Richland County Emergency Management in May of 2024.

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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 continues to serve as the public health medical advisor for standing orders. Immunizations offered by public health are available due to federally funded vaccines 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. Each year flu vaccines are made available for the entire community, with mass vaccine clinics that occur at local schools. All ACIP recommended vaccines continue to be offered to qualifying families monthly at the Health Department.

Immunization	2024	2023	Immunization	2024	2023
COVID Pfizer 5-11yrs	4	-	Polio	9	1
COVID Pfizer 12+	1	-	Prevnar	7	2
COVID Pfizer 6mos-4yrs	1	1	Td	5	4
COVID Pfizer Bivalent Booster	N/A	3	Varicella	22	5
DTaP	-	1	Meningo	12	4
Hepatitis A	13	4	Td-Pertussis (Tdap)	11	8
Hepatitis B	7	1	HPV (Gardasil)	2	2
Adult Hepatitis B	2	-	RotaTeq	-	2
Adult Hepatitis A	2	-	DTaP-Hib-Polio (Pentacel)	8	2
Influenza	328	457	DTaP-Polio (KINRIX)	3	-
MMR	9	3	Proquad (MMRV)	-	3

Total Immunizations	2024	2023
	446	503

Overall, the number of VFC/VFA vaccines increased from 2023 to 2024 from 46 to 118. Richland County Public Health staff provide immunization services for Richland County Residents including:

- Monthly Vaccine for Children & Adult Immunization Clinics & Promotions
- Vaccine clinics for local school districts
- Vaccines to area care facilities serving the elderly & Disabled populations
- Outreach to Amish & Spanish-speaking populations



PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Communicable Disease Follow-Up & Investigation

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.

Despite reports of measles and pertussis activity in the country and state of Wisconsin in 2024, Richland County did not have any local outbreaks of these conditions. The overall number of communicable disease cases reported decreased in 2024. Specific infection control measures such as isolation, quarantine, and 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	2023	2024	Disease Group	2023	2024
Adult Lead	0	3	Lyme Disease	44	74
Babesiosis	2	2	Metal Poisoning (Non-Lead)	1	0
Campylobacteriosis	6	7	MRSA	1	3
Carbon Monoxide Poisoning	6	3	Mycobacterial Disease (Nontuberculous)	1	4
Chlamydia Trachomatis Infection	38	19	Not Reportable	3	0
Coronavirus	462	172	Pathogenic E. Coli	2	5
Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis	2	12	Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	1	1
Environmental & Occupational Lung Diseases	0	4	Q Fever	0	1
Giardiasis	1	1	RSV	67	92
Gonorrhea	6	1	Salmonellosis	10	7
Hepatitis B	1	4	Streptococcus Pneumoniae Invasive Disease	1	2
Hepatitis C	3	3	Syphilis	0	1
Histoplasmosis	0	1	Tuberculosis, Latent Infection (LTBI)	5	8
Influenza	87	285	Varicella (Chickenpox)	0	1
Invasive Streptococcal Disease (Groups A&B)	3	0	Yersiniosis	0	1

Total Diseases	2023: 755	2024: 718
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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.

*198 total TB skin tests were provided in 2024,
compared to 135 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 2024, the Wisconsin DHS TB dispensary program was accessed 1 time for dispensing of medications in Richland County (down from 4 times in 2023). There was a total of 9 suspect/probable/confirmed LTBI cases reported in 2024, with one infected person brought to successful completion of treatment. Richland County Public Health nursing staff provide direct observation therapy (DOT) medication services to these clients in the clinic setting, each over the course of approximately 12 weeks.

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 ensure 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.

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PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

In 2024 Public Health staff provided follow up on a total of 53 cases for rabies control.

In 2024, public health staff authorized fee exempt testing for 8 specimens, which were primarily dogs, but also included 2 bats. These specimens were submitted to the Wisconsin State lab of Hygiene. There was one reported positive rabies result in a bat specimen in 2024, with all other specimens having a negative result for rabies.

2024 Fight the Bite Campaign: Evan Ewing, Public Health Specialist, was a guest on WRCO Morning Show in July of 2024 and shared information on prevention of tick, mosquito, and animal bites. Evan provided a Fight the Bite presentation to youth within the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Program. Five youth attended the presentation and tick bite prevention kits were given to youth, containing a magnifying glass, tweezers, tick identification cards, bandages, and alcohol wipes. These tick bite prevention kits were also distributed to the community during the National Night Out event in August of 2024.

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 2024, there were 13 MCH referrals received by Richland County Public Health from area healthcare providers. 3 clients accepted a home visit from a Public Health Nurse, with attempts at outreach and education to all referred clients, first by phone call, and then a mailed birth packet.

Additionally, Richland County Public Health mailed information in birth packets to 204 total families in 2024 (an increase from 151 in 2023). These birth packets include updated education & brochures from SWCAP, WIC, Birth to 3, and information on milestone developments, immunizations, and car seat safety, home safety; QR codes were implemented into the packets to help facilitate learning for digital learners.

Richland County Public Health continued to coordinate the Richland County Breastfeeding Coalition Quarterly Meetings in 2024. 3 total meetings occurred at The Richland Hospital, one meeting with a hybrid/virtual format. Community partners that attended included local public health, hospital birth center staff and a medical provider, SWCAP and WIC staff, as well as other area professionals with the goal of developing a resource document for area families about breastfeeding.

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PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Environmental Health

Richland County provides the essential services of human health hazard control by assessing and responding to human health hazards and environmental health concerns, as well as providing education, recommendations to correct any potential hazards to a person or families’ health and safety that can potentially negatively impact a person’s health. In 2024, Richland County Public Health Staff provided 32 home visits in response to various complaints. Of note, Richland County implemented a new digital tool for documentation of complaints and case management.

2024 Environmental Health Hazard Breakdown

Vermin	3	Unsafe/Unsanitary Conditions	19
Unburied Carcasses	2	Hazardous Materials	4
Mold	11	Non-Functioning Building Materials	8
Waste Accumulation	12	Obnoxious Odor	2
Total:			61

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

In 2024, 46 Radon test kits were distributed and 29 test kits returned.

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PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

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 Staff and Nurses 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.

181 Richland County children were screened for lead exposure in 2024 with 18 reported cases of elevated blood lead test results

Lead-In Water Testing & Remediation Initiative

In 2024, the Richland County Public Health unit participated in the Wisconsin Lead-In-Water Testing and Remediation (WTR) Initiative which works to reduce drinking water hazards within licensed group child care centers. The program is free for centers to participate and the state of WI Department of Health Services offers free plumbing replacement for water fixtures identified with water samples containing lead levels of 10 parts per billion or higher. Richland County Public Health facilitated water sample collection for one licensed child care facility within Richland County in 2024. Initial and follow-up sampling have been completed for this facility and public health plans to continue expanding testing into other licensed childcare facilities in 2025.

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 2024, the loan closet rented out 340 items throughout the year.

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PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Richland Community Free Clinic

The Free Clinic provides primary health care to people who meet eligibility and is staffed by medical professionals and community volunteers on Tuesday mornings at The Richland Hospital. Richland County Public Health staff offered flu vaccines to patients of the free clinic, coordinating this effort with assistance from free clinic staff in the fall, primarily for Spanish-speaking families. Public Health nurses were able to provide VFC & VFA Flu and COVID vaccines to these clients that were referred by the Free Clinic staff.