



Dakota County
Recovery Plan

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery
Funds**

2023 Report (July 2023)



Dakota County

2023 Recovery Plan

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Dakota County was organized in 1849 as a county in the State of Minnesota. It has an area of 587 square miles, including 13 townships and 21 full and fractional incorporated municipalities. The 2022 population was 442,038, making it the third-most populous county in the state. It is one of seven counties comprising the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Dakota County operates under an elected seven-member County Board, each member representing a district of the county. County Board responsibilities include passing ordinances, adopting the budget, and hiring the County Manager. The County Manager is responsible for carrying out the policies and ordinances of the County Board, overseeing the government's day-to-day operations, and appointing the heads of the various divisions and departments. More information regarding Dakota County can be found on the Dakota County website:

www.co.dakota.mn.us.

Dakota County was allocated \$83,332,300.00 in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF). The first tranche was received on June 14, 2021 and the second on June 16, 2022. The Dakota County Board has developed principles for the County's use of SLFRF funds which include countywide importance and impacts; lasting impact; partnership and coordination; innovation; avoid duplicating other programs; confidence in the ability to deliver programs and projects as planned; efficient administration; conform to County Fiscal Management Principles. The Board passes resolutions in support of each allocation to programs and projects. The Board has continued to engage in discussion regarding SLFRF funding including multiple discussions over the past year. This included discussions on specific funding requests and planning sessions at meetings.

Dakota County has chosen to fund projects that both respond to the pandemic and promote economic recovery. First, Dakota County has provided resources to those most impacted by the pandemic. Examples include a project focused on outreach to communities of color and several projects related to mental health services and supports. Second, Dakota County has funded projects that help to build infrastructure and promote economic recovery. Examples include funding for improvements to the Byllesby Dam, a project related to municipal wastewater connection, and the Thompson Oaks River to River Greenway project. Third, in some instances, projects are both providing services for those most impacted by the pandemic and helping to build infrastructure for the future. Examples include a youth shelter, a workforce mobility program, the South St. Paul Library, Nichols Point, and a Crisis and Recovery Center. One challenge encountered by Dakota County has been hiring staff in a challenging labor market, which has led to some program delays.

Dakota County has four strategic plan goals:

- **A great place to live:** Dakota County strives to be a welcoming place where all people are safe, have opportunities to thrive, and enjoy a high lifelong quality of life.
- **A healthy environment with quality natural areas:** Dakota County protects and maintains natural resources for the health and enjoyment of current and future residents.

- **A successful place for business and jobs:** Dakota County fosters business and employment success through modern infrastructure, low taxes, and a prepared, connected workforce.
- **Excellence in public service:** Dakota County demonstrates stewardship of human and financial resources, communicates and engages with the public, and innovates and collaborates to provide excellent service.

Dakota County uses Results Based Accountability as part of an established measurement framework. This includes a set of community indicators to provide data at the population accountability level ([Community Indicators| Dakota County](#)). All programs and services in the County including all SLFRF funded projects, provide data at the performance accountability level by providing information on how much they are doing, how well they are doing it, and program impact. Evaluation information on funded projects can be found in the Project Inventory section of this report.

Uses of Funds

The Dakota County Board developed principles for the County's use of SLFRF funds which include countywide importance and impacts; lasting impact; partnership and coordination; innovation; avoid duplicating other programs; confidence in the ability to deliver programs and projects as planned; efficient administration; conform to County Fiscal Management Principles.

The Board continues to discuss SLFRF funding opportunities and receive updates regularly from staff. This includes discussions on specific funding requests and planning sessions at meetings.

- In April 2021, the Board reviewed the funding that would be provided directly to the County; reviewed a current snapshot of economic, employment, and housing conditions in Dakota County that was relevant to decision-making on SLFRF funds; and discussed some of the steps the County would need to take to receive, prioritize, deploy, track, and report on SLFRF funds.
- In June 2021, the Board received an update on the status of the SLFRF and US Treasury rules for their use, and the current status of SLFRF planning in neighboring jurisdictions. The Board set principles for decision-making on SLFRF and other resources and reviewed areas for potential investment of SLFRF funds in Dakota County.
- In September 2021, the Board reviewed reporting requirements, Revenue Replacement calculations, and a list of potential investment areas.
- In November 2021, the Board held a Budget Workshop to provide direction on the use of funding on eligible items in the County Manager's recommended and Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget and to determine the Board's interest in other items that were eligible for SLFRF funding but not yet in the current recommended budget.
- In February 2022, the Board reviewed reporting, spending, and partner requests for potential funding.
- In June 2022, at their Budget Workshop, the Board reviewed the estimated costs to continue programs funded in 2022 through 2026 and a list of capital projects eligible to

be funded that were on track for completion by the end of 2026. All potential projects continue to align with the established principles and focus of the Board.

- In November 2022, at the County Budget hearings, the Board heard information on progress of SLFRF funded programs and reasons to continue programs through 2023. The Board also reviewed the 2023-2027 draft Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which included projects utilizing SLFRF funding.
- In December 2022, the County Board adopted the 2023 budget and 2023-2027 CIP which include operational and capital projects funded with SLFRF.
- In March 2023, the Board received an update on current spending and approved budgets for all SLFRF projects.
- In June 2023, at the Budget Workshop, the County Board heard updates on currently approved SLFRF projects and potential continued funding for existing SLFRF funded programs into 2024 as well as additional new options for SLFRF funded CIP projects.
- The Board receives a copy of the Quarterly Project and Expenditure Reports and the Annual Recovery Plan Performance Report.

The Board also continues to review individual program/project funding requests brought before them by staff for approval. A summary of funded projects sorted according to expenditure category is included below.

- **Public Health (EC 1):** In response to high demand for crisis mental health services and changing community expectations, the Board approved adding 9.0 FTE social workers to **Dakota County's Crisis Response Unit**. Additional social workers will focus on mobile crisis response, responding in pairs and/or with public safety partners. For **Mental Health Crisis Follow-up**, Social Services will pair a mental health social worker, employed by Dakota County Social Services, with dedicated law enforcement/public safety partners. The joint law enforcement/public safety and mental health team visits with individuals/households who have been identified by law enforcement as a result of previous contact(s). The **Crisis and Recovery Center** will be a regional resource for mental health crisis assessment, stabilization, and treatment services as an alternative to, or transition from, hospital level care. This new center will provide 16 bedrooms with bathrooms for privacy and safety. The center will also include a place to go for assessment, support, and connection to resources. The **Law Enforcement Center Integrative Health Unit**, which is planned to break ground in the fall of 2023, will add capacity to the existing County Jail and will help to meet the demonstrated needs for dedicated medical and mental health spaces. Over the past decade, there has been a demonstrated and growing need to provide medical and mental health services to County residents, including inmates housed at the County Jail.
- **Negative Economic Impacts (EC 2):** To be completed in conjunction with construction of the **Dakota County River to River Regional Greenway trail**, the project on former Thompson Oaks municipal golf course property converts 10 acres of the former municipal golf course to a regional stormwater treatment system and restores a former wetland and creek complex. Dakota County is partnering with the City of West St. Paul and the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization to implement the project within a diverse and underserved community within the south metro. The

Thompson Oaks project is located within qualified census tract number 601.05. The proposed project will directly work to lower Total Suspended Solids (TSS) levels by targeting a highly urbanized sub watershed for regional stormwater treatment. The **South St. Paul Library** will be the County's tenth branch library location. This new library, part of the Dakota County Library system, will respond to critical needs in the community, including in the areas of health care, employment, and workforce development. The new building will also provide public access to the internet for purposes including work, education, and health monitoring. **Nicols Pointe** is a 24-unit apartment building in Eagan that will be affordable to persons aged 55 and up, with a preference for Veterans. All units will be income-restricted for households at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The project will be developed, owned, and operated by the Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA).

- **Water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure (EC 5):** The results of a Power Production Study of **Byllesby Dam** show the aging turbines, generators, and ancillary components needed to produce electricity have greatly exceeded their operational life. Financial analysis show that a full turbine upgrade provides the best return on investment. This project replaces the aging turbines to produce water generated electricity.
- **Revenue Replacement (EC 6):** To date, eleven projects/initiatives have been funded with revenue replacement. This includes funding to provide additional resources to services impacted by the pandemic such as assistance with emergency shelter, the criminal court backlog, assistance with the Law Library, a workforce program, funding to assist with mental health resources, and funding to assist with managing public assistance programs. It includes funding for an initiative that focuses on contracts with community organizations to address the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic and related hardships on communities of color, as well as support for lasting social and economic infrastructure such a youth shelter and a program that helps low-income homeowners with a failing septic system make a connection to a municipal wastewater treatment system.

Dakota County is planning other programming using other federal recovery funds: Emergency Rental Assistance and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME).

Dakota County received two installments of Federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds. The first through the Consolidated Appropriations Act (\$12.8 million - ERA1) and the second through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) (\$10.1 million - ERA2). Dakota County is operating both a Tenant Access Program and a Landlord "Portfolio" Program with the ERA funds. The Tenant Access Program utilizes Dakota County staff to process applications. The Landlord Program, also known as the Zero Balance Project, is structured through a joint power's agreement with the Counties of Dakota, Hennepin, and Ramsey and the Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Family Housing Fund will act as the Landlord Program Administrator. Additionally, Dakota County has contracted with community partners to outreach to both tenants and landlords to help create successful and complete applications.

The ARP provides \$5 billion to assist individuals or households who are homeless, at risk of homelessness and other vulnerable populations. These grant funds will be administered through HOME.

The Dakota County HOME Consortium (comprised of Dakota, Ramsey, Washington and Anoka Counties, and the City of Woodbury) is one of the 651 state and local participating jurisdictions eligible to receive HOME-ARP grants. The Dakota County Consortium HOME-ARP allocation is \$8,762,441, which will be distributed amongst the Consortium members via a percentage based on the 2021 Consortium percentages. The amount of HOME-ARP funds to be used within the jurisdiction of Dakota County is approximately \$3.2 million.

HOME-ARP funds can be used for four eligible activities: Production or Preservation of Affordable Housing, Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, Supportive Services, Homeless Prevention Services, and Housing Counseling, Purchase and Development of Non-Congregate Shelter. HUD-ARP funds are available for expenditure until September 2030.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

The 2022 population for Dakota County is 442,038. In Dakota County, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are one quarter of the population. In addition to demographic data, Dakota County has a history of monitoring community indicators and using data as an input into decisions. Some indicators tracked on an ongoing basis include households burdened by housing costs, median household income, jobs and wages, unemployment and poverty, public assistance, health insurance, crime rates, and access to broadband.

Dakota County also has a history of engaging in programs and partnerships to produce equitable outcomes. One use of SLFRF funds has been an initiative that focuses on contracting with community organizations to address the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 and related hardships on communities of color with a focus on Black and Latino communities. Goals include:

- Inform community members about COVID-19 and available resources.
- Assist County residents in navigating support programs and gaining access to services.
- Slowing the spread of COVID-19.
- Supporting recovery from the pandemic.
- Advising the County's communication strategies to improve reach and effectiveness with communities of color.
- Collaborate with and inform Public Health regarding vaccine clinics and resources.

Funding was used to partner with six community agencies including AG Consulting and Associations, Ally Supportive Services, Dakota Child and Family Clinic, ISD #191, Minnesota African Women Coalition, and Restoration for All Inc. Some of the outcomes from these efforts include thousands of individuals in Dakota County receiving reliable information related to COVID-19 in their primary language through a variety of community channels and expanded barrier free healthcare.

In addition to the project above, other projects are also focused on addressing equitable outcomes and the impacts of the pandemic. One example includes efforts related to crisis response and follow-up. Providing a mental health versus police response during a crisis can reduce community/individual trauma and promote long-term health for historically underserved and marginalized communities. Another example is the Workforce Mobility program. This pilot program will provide free tuition in credit or non-credit training for Dakota County residents in key identified in-demand industry sectors.

Community Engagement

Dakota County has a history of using multiple community engagement strategies including surveys, partnerships, meetings, social media, website, and mailed materials. Dakota County staff have continued to utilize and build on these strategies with SLFRF funding.

- **Partnerships:** Dakota County works with numerous partners on community engagement. There are several examples of this related to SLFRF funds. In one example, Dakota County is partnering with community organizations to provide important information and resources to communities of color. This provides an opportunity for contract partners to provide outreach, education, engagement, and navigation assistance to support community members that have historically faced barriers to services. In another example, Dakota County engaged diverse stakeholder groups to inform crisis services and continuum expansion including work with metro crisis groups to create brief videos to promote use of crisis services with a focus on outreach to communities of color.
- **Public Meetings/Forums/Open Houses/Classes:** Dakota County often holds meetings – both virtual and in-person – with residents to collect feedback for specific projects. There are several examples of this related to SLFRF funded projects. In one example, a series of public meetings were held regarding the municipal wastewater treatment system project. County staff were present for information and questions as relates to the dollars available to residents. In another example, community/neighborhood outreach and meetings have been held related to the Aspen House youth shelter. In another example, staff have engaged with key stakeholders regarding the Crisis and Recovery Center at several public meetings. In yet another example, the Dakota County Law Library hosted monthly legal education classes that are open to all.
- **Residential Survey:** In addition to numerous program-specific surveys, Dakota County completes a random sample mailed survey with residents every three years. The most recent survey was completed in March 2022. The Dakota County Residential Survey provides residents an opportunity to rate the quality of life in the county as well as service delivery and their satisfaction with county government. The survey also gives residents an avenue to provide feedback to the County about what is working well and what is not, and to share their priorities for the County. More information regarding the residential survey can be found at [Residential Survey| Dakota County](#).
- **Mailing Materials:** For the Workforce Mobility Program, postcards were sent to over 44,000 households in Dakota County with an income of \$50,000 or less to provide information about the program/opportunity. For Aspen House, email and US postal mail

was sent to nearby neighbors and stakeholders to provide updates on progress and an invitation to an open house.

- **Social Media:** Dakota County has a presence on social media, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, NextDoor, LinkedIn, and Instagram.
- **Website:** The Dakota County website provides an opportunity to both share information and receive feedback or questions. The website receives more than 3.4 million visits (7 million page views) per year.
- **Newsletters:** Aspen House was profiled in the Dakota County newsletter sent to all addresses in the county.

Labor Practices

Dakota County complies with Minnesota law and Dakota County policy regarding seeking competitive bids and quotes. Dakota County in all requests for proposals, requests for bids, and contracts includes language requiring contractors to comply with all laws, including the Fair Labor Standards Act and other labor laws. Furthermore, the Dakota County Board has adopted a resolution requiring all construction contracts over \$25,000 to include language requiring contractors to comply with prevailing wage requirements. Dakota County's standard contract assurances (which are part of all contracts) include language specifically relating to prevailing wage compliance. Finally, Dakota County requires contractors to post prevailing wage information at job sites.

Use of Evidence

Dakota County is using evidence-based interventions for both the Mental Health Crisis Response and Mental Health Crisis Follow-up. In addition, specific reports/evidence are cited for the Byllesby Dam project, River to River Greenway – Thompson Oaks, South St Paul Library, Nicols Pointe, Crisis and Recovery Center, and Integrative Health Unit of Incarcerated People to illustrate the data that was used to plan for each project. More information on all eight projects can be found in the Project Inventory.

As previously noted, Dakota County uses Results Based Accountability. All programs and services in the County provide data at the performance accountability level by providing information on how much they are doing, how well they are doing it, and program impact. This approach covers both process and outcome evaluation. All SLFRF projects are required to use this framework to evaluate their efforts. In addition, an evaluation and reporting team has been established to discuss and plan for the evaluation of funded projects, coordinate data collection, and share results.

Performance Report

All Dakota County projects/initiatives, including SLFRF projects, support one or more Dakota County goals:

- **A great place to live:** Dakota County strives to be a welcoming place where all people are safe, have opportunities to thrive, and enjoy a high lifelong quality of life.

- **A healthy environment with quality natural areas:** Dakota County protects and maintains natural resources for the health and enjoyment of current and future residents.
- **A successful place for business and jobs:** Dakota County fosters business and employment success through modern infrastructure, low taxes, and a prepared, connected workforce.
- **Excellence in public service:** Dakota County demonstrates stewardship of human and financial resources, communicates and engages with the public, and innovates and collaborates to provide excellent service.

Dakota County uses Results Based Accountability ([Results-Based Accountability - Overview and Guide \(clearimpact.com\)](#)). This includes a set of community indicators to provide data at the population accountability level ([Community Indicators| Dakota County](#)). This provides for overarching jurisdictional measurement. All programs and services in the County provide data at the performance accountability or individual project level by providing information on how much they are doing, how well they are doing it, and program impact. All SLFRF funded projects are required to report this information. In addition, an evaluation and reporting team has been established to discuss and plan for the evaluation of funded projects. Additional measurement information is included in the Project Inventory section of the report.

PROJECT INVENTORY

Directly Funded

Byllesby Dam

Identification Number: BD00008

Funding Amount: \$22,124,830

Expenditure as of 06/30/2023: \$7,416,623

Expenditure Category: 5.7 Clean Water: Energy Conservation

Website:

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Environment/WaterResources/LakeByllesbyDamReservoir/Pages/dam-maintenance.aspx>

Overview

Dakota County owns the Byllesby Dam and operates its high-hazard hydroelectric facility under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) safety regulations. The County is in the process of completing turbine and powerhouse upgrades for the Byllesby Dam Water-to-Wire Redevelopment Project to modernize and maximize production of clean energy from the Dam.

To complete this project, County staff developed a team including an engineering consultant to provide project design, a turbine manufacturer to provide turbine and generation equipment in a complete package (e.g., water-to-wire equipment), and a general contractor for redevelopment

of the site with installation of the equipment and modification to the powerhouse structure. A high-level 2023/2024 project timeline is included below.

- **Q3 2023:** Generators installed
- **Q2 2024:** Scheduled completion date

Use of Evidence

The results of a Power Production Study of Byllesby Dam show the aging turbines, generators, and ancillary components needed to produce electricity have greatly exceeded their operational life. Financial analysis show that a full turbine upgrade provides the best return on investment. This project replaces the aging turbines to produce water generated electricity.

According to a 2014 presentation to County Senior Leadership, the realistic maximum potential savings were gauged to be up to \$1,000,000 annually. Additionally, it was estimated that the updates could reduce the counties' greenhouse gas emissions from over 23,000 metric tons (2010) to 12,500 metric tons through the self-operation of the dam.

Performance Report

Overall project goals include:

- Preserve the clean energy generation capability for at least another 50 years.
- Replace century-old original head gates, draft tubes, overhead crane rails, generators, and turbines.
- Remove flood damaged concrete and bedrock chunks from river channel.
- Address dam safety issues like cracks in the Ambursen buttress dam and a stormwater pipe penetration through the north embankment.
- Restore the historic character of the façade by replacing blocked-up windows and repairing walls and roofs.
- Replace the 20- to 40-year-old stop logs, interior ventilation system and electrical switchgear.
- Upgrade to generating units that are more efficient and are matched to site head and flow conditions.
- Address worker safety concerns by relocating the maintenance and operator entrance out of the icy spray zone.

Structural steel for head gates, draft tubes, and tailraces for both turbines are nearly complete. Several concrete pours to finish the back bays and pours for the generator placement are nearly complete.

River to River Greenway – Thompson Oaks Segment

Identification Number: 8470973130

Funding Amount: \$4,975,265

Expenditure as of 06/30/2023: \$4,325,017

Expenditure Category: 2.22 Strong Healthy Communities: Neighborhood Features that Promote Health and Safety

Website: <https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/parks/CurrentProjects/Construction/Pages/thompson-oaks.aspx>

Overview

The project is located on the former Thompson Oaks municipal golf course property and converts 10 acres of the former municipal golf course to a regional stormwater treatment system and restores a former wetland and creek complex which was destroyed via filling of construction waste and other debris in the 1980s. The project is located within qualified census tract number 601.05.

The River to River Greenway Master Plan identified this new greenway alignment, which will connect to the Robert Street Underpass east across the former Thompson Oaks Golf Course owned by the City of West St. Paul. In 2018, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners executed a joint powers agreement (JPA) with the City of West St. Paul to design the Greenway and potential Water Quality Project adjacent to potential city residential development projects on the parcel.

The project will directly work to lower TSS (Total Suspended Solids) and TP (Total Phosphorus) levels by targeting a highly urbanized sub watershed for regional stormwater treatment. The project combines stormwater treatment, drinking water protection, and contaminated soil remediation with economic redevelopment, recreational opportunities, and shared green space amenities while fostering community education and public engagement on surface water and groundwater quality issues and solutions. A high-level project timeline is included below.

- **Q3/Q4 2022:** Soil remediation and pond grading
- **Q1 2023:** Wetland restoration, weir construction, boardwalk construction
- **Q2 2023:** Final landscape restoration and trail paving
- **Q3/Q4:** Project completion

Use of Evidence

In reviewing the property and potential water quality project, a large historical dumpsite was evaluated for remediation. Additionally, a documented history of dumped construction waste into former wetlands and identification of a historical creek that once flowed through the parcel also presented a significant opportunity for restoration. The proposed project treats approximately 25% of the total impervious land area within the city totaling 216 acres of untreated impervious surface. Levels of total suspended solids currently exceed the TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) established site specific standard of 32 mg/L TSS at Lock and Dam 2 and 3 under the South Metro Mississippi River TMDL. The project creates approximately 0.4 mile of River to River Greenway plus approximately 380 lineal feet of boardwalk across the pond and wetland complex.

Performance Report

Public engagement occurred via the project website and presentations at a West St. Paul City Council Meeting and a Dakota County Board of Commissioners meeting in Q4 2021. The project design was finalized in Q1 2022 in preparation for a construction bid advertisement. In Q2 2022, the construction contract was awarded and executed, along with the securing of all building permits. Construction started in Q3 2022. The project is nearing completion with substantial completion anticipated for the end of August 2023. Boardwalk and most of the trail section has been installed. Remaining work includes approximately 600 LF of trail and the 72" storm sewer pretreatment chamber.

Mental Health Crisis Follow-up

Identification Number: 8430021101

Funding Amount: \$651,696

Expenditure as of 06/30/2023: \$327,538

Expenditure Category: 1.12 Mental Health Services

Website:

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/HealthFamily/MentalHealth/Response/Pages/default.aspx>

Overview

In this model, a Dakota County mental health professional social worker partners with one or more dedicated Community Engagement/Mental Health officers at participating police departments. The officer and mental health professional review calls for service that may indicate an underlying mental health issue and follow-up with people who have experienced a crisis. The main goals of follow-up include offering and facilitating connection to on-going services and supports, as needed, and providing immediate short-term therapeutic intervention. This often helps mitigate future crisis situations.

The Dakota County Coordinated Response model started as a prototype idea between Dakota County and the City of Hastings in September of 2018. The model developed into an official pilot program in the cities of South St. Paul and West St. Paul starting in January of 2019. In 2020, the County Board approved expansion of the Coordinated Response Pilot to Apple Valley and Rosemount. The Dakota County Board of Commissioners approved expansion to all interested cities through a Letter of Interest process in February of 2022. Hiring for the open positions began in April of 2022. There are currently 12 FTE social worker positions available in the Crisis Follow-up and Stabilization Unit, plus one FTE supervisor. Eight of the 12 positions are dedicated to the Embedded Social Work model.

A high-level project timeline is included below.

- **Q2 - Q3 2022:** Continue hiring process to reach full staffing complement. Social Services and police departments will begin to work together to develop consistent policies and procedures, data tracking, and Joint Powers Agreements.
- **Q4 2022:** Full implementation of countywide Social Services-Public Safety "embedded social worker" program.
- **Q1 2023:** Hire/maintain full staffing complement and social worker assignments in all participating cities.

- **Q2 2023:** Maintain staffing complement and meet JPA expectations for service delivery.
- **Q3 2023:** Further develop consistent, countywide output and outcome measures and technology solutions. Identify sustainable funding options.
- **Q4 2023:** Evaluate 2023 activities and plan for 2024.

Use of Evidence

In 2014, Social Services worked with the State of Minnesota Office of Management and Budget on the Results First project and with the Improve Group on a study on impact of mobile crisis services. According to the 2016 Results First adult mental health services inventory, mobile crisis response returns \$3.90 on every \$1.00 of taxpayer investment. According to the Improve Group’s Mobile Crisis Impact Analysis and Cost Effectiveness Study completed in 2017, key impacts of mobile crisis services are health, safety, prevention, support, and navigation.

The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) published the National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care – A Best Practice Toolkit which defines national guidelines in crisis care, provides tips for implementing a system of care that aligns with guidelines, and offers tools to evaluate alignment. The Toolkit emphasizes the importance of crisis services that are for anyone, anywhere, and anytime which fits with Dakota County’s model. Toolkit concepts and guidelines continue to be leveraged as Dakota County continues to evolve and improve the local and regional crisis services continuum. This program is part of the Dakota County Crisis Continuum in accordance with national best practice guidelines which includes:

- Someone to talk to
- Mobile/Emergency Response
- Somewhere to Go
- **Crisis Follow-Up**

The total project spending that is allocated towards evidence-based interventions is \$327,538.

Performance Report

Accomplishments from 2022 are highlighted below.

- Increased opportunity to connect with people experiencing a mental health crisis through 9-1-1 Diversion efforts.
 - 1,058 call transfers from 911 to Crisis Response Unit
 - 79% of transferred calls handled without law enforcement response
- Expansion of Mobile Crisis Response
 - Increased call volume and site visits
 - 20,000 calls (2022); 8% increase from 2021
 - 600 site visits (2022); 87.5% increase from 2021
- Countywide expansion of program including 4 of 5 new positions filled and 7 of 10 participating police departments with embedded social work assignments.
- Fully executed Joint Powers Agreements with all participating cities.
- Ability to track key data points:
 - 1,118 intakes (outreach that led to engagement and/or service coordination)
 - 206 completed site visits

- 253 crisis stabilization cases opened (38% referred through police partnership)
- The program and accomplishments are highlighted in this news story: [Insight 7 - Dakota County Crisis Continuum on Vimeo](#)

2023 Accomplishments include:

- 10/10 participating police departments have some level of embedded social worker support.
- Q 1 2023: 431 crisis-follow-up outreach intakes completed; 143 face-to-face intakes completed.
- Q2 2023: 419 crisis-follow-up outreach intakes completed; 144 face-to-face intakes completed.

Mental Health Crisis Response

Identification Number: 8430021100

Funding Amount: \$707,926

Expenditure as of 06/30/2023: \$416,169

Expenditure Category: 1.12 Mental Health Services

Website: [Adult Mental Health| Dakota County](#)

Overview

Dakota County's Crisis Response Unit (CRU) was established in 1993 to respond to increasing County costs related to child placements by law enforcement. The County was later required by Minn. Stat. § 256B.0624 and Minn. Stat. § 256B.0944 to have its own mental health crisis response, and CRU evolved to also meet that requirement.

In response to high demand for crisis mental health services and changing community expectations, the Board approved adding 9.0 FTE social workers (SWs) to Dakota County's Crisis Response Unit. Additional social workers will focus on mobile crisis response, responding in pairs and/or with public safety partners. Following a mobile crisis assessment or intervention, social workers will connect residents with crisis follow-up or other ongoing services.

Staff respond to calls to provide crisis planning, develop coping strategies, and refer to outside resources. This can be face-to-face or by phone. The CRU is also the after-hours entry point across all County social service programs, including vulnerable adult protective services; child protection; parent/child conflict; and many others. A high-level project timeline is included below:

- **Q3 2022:** Monitor staff progress and service expansion.
- **Q4 2022:** Evaluate program progress.
- **Q1 2023:** Hire/maintain full staffing complement. Continue to onboard and train staff to perform complex roles.
- **Q2 2023:** Team building, countywide practice development, refine policies and procedures. and maintain ongoing communication and shared planning with cities/police departments.

- **Q3 2023:** Plan for program sustainability.
- **Q4 2023:** Review and evaluate 2023 activities and plan for 2024.

Use of Evidence

In 2014, Social Services worked with the State of Minnesota Office of Management and Budget on the Results First project and with the Improve Group on a study on impact of mobile crisis services. According to the 2016 Results First adult mental health services inventory, mobile crisis response returns \$3.90 on every \$1.00 of taxpayer investment. According to the Improve Group's Mobile Crisis Impact Analysis and Cost Effectiveness Study completed in 2017, key impacts of mobile crisis services are health, safety, prevention, support, and navigation.

The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently published the National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care – A Best Practice Toolkit which defines national guidelines in crisis care, provides tips for implementing a system of care that aligns with guidelines, and offers tools to evaluate alignment. The Toolkit emphasizes the importance of crisis services that are for anyone, anywhere and anytime which fits with Dakota County's model. Toolkit concepts and guidelines will be leveraged as we continue to evolve and improve the local and regional crisis services continuum. This program is part of the Dakota County Crisis Continuum in accordance with national best practice guidelines which includes:

- Someone to talk to
- **Mobile/Emergency Response**
- Somewhere to Go
- Crisis Follow-Up

The total project spending that is allocated towards evidence-based interventions is \$416,169.

Performance Report

2022 and 2023 program accomplishments are included below:

- Continue 911 call transfer process. 1,058 call transfers from September 2021-September 2022. 79% of calls handled without law enforcement response. Now, averaging 2-3 call transfers from 911 a day.
- New mobile response capacity resulting in more mobile site visits and intakes. Number of site visits per day has nearly doubled. Total site visits completed by phone/mobile team in 2022 was 600 (87.5% increase from 2021).
- Intakes (which often involve multiple calls/contacts) are now averaging 30/day. In 2021, total intakes averaged 19/day. Total intakes in 2022 were 10,636. The total calls in 2022 were 20,000. Approximately 30% of CRU intakes are referrals from law enforcement.
- In Q1 2023 there were 3,433 crisis-intakes completed; 206 face-to-face intakes completed.
- Hiring and onboarding of staff is an ongoing process. At the end of Q2, five of the positions were filled.
- At the end of Q2 2023, eight of ten police departments had some level of co-located CRU support.
- The program and accomplishments are highlighted in this news story: [Insight 7 - Dakota County Crisis Continuum on Vimeo](#)

Crisis and Recovery Center

Identification Number:

Funding Amount: \$4,040,072

Expenditure as of 06/30/2023: \$0.00

Expenditure Category: 1.12 Mental Health Services

Website: [Adult Mental Health| Dakota County](#)

Overview

The Crisis and Recovery Center will be a regional resource for mental health crisis assessment, stabilization, and treatment services as an alternative to, or transition from, hospital level care. This new center, located in West St. Paul, MN, will provide 16 bedrooms with bathrooms for privacy and safety. The center will also include a place to go for assessment, support, and connection to resources. The 16,000-square-foot, two-story center will accommodate people with physical disabilities, which is a limitation of the current buildings. The center will include three service concepts:

- Crisis assessment and support services that will be an alternative to more intensive or restrictive settings. This was an identified need and a gap in Dakota County's existing crisis services continuum.
- Intensive Residential Treatment Services (IRTS) are typically a 90-day stay with a specific focus on recovery and it is usually individuals who were recently discharged from a hospital.
- Crisis Residential Services (CRS) are short-term services for those in acute crisis that include a stay from 1-5 days.

The project timeline includes:

- **Q1/Q2 2023:** Complete design development phase work.
- **Q3 2023:** Bidding and contract award for construction.
- **Q4 2023:** Begin construction; begin work on lease agreement and service contract.
- **Early 2025:** Crisis and Recovery Center opens.

Use of Evidence

Dakota County uses the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) best practice framework for designing an effective crisis continuum. Dakota County's mental health crisis continuum provides 24/7 phone support, mobile response, crisis follow-up and crisis stabilization. The new facility will address growing needs and gaps in the "somewhere to go" part of the crisis continuum. The project will:

- Maintain and improve locally available services.
- Provide the right level of care at the right time.
- Increase residential capacity, plus ability to maintain maximum capacity.
- Offer welcoming, accessible, and trauma-informed space for assessment, support care and healing.

- Create more and better space for crisis assessment, stabilization, client/family meetings, and treatment.

Performance Report

The guiding principles of this project include:

- A community asset that meets current and future needs
- Trauma-informed design
- Transparent design process that encourages diverse perspectives
- Calm and welcoming space that reflects inclusivity, accessibility, comfort, and safety
- Building that is sustainable and durable

Project activities and accomplishments include completion of project design work, completion of requests for additional project funding, regular communication with partners, and continued engagement of stakeholders.

Nicols Pointe

Identification Number: DC-1872

Funding Amount: \$9,000,000

Expenditure as of 06/30/2023: \$0

Expenditure Category: 2.15 Long-Term Housing Security: Affordable Housing

Website: [Nicols Pointe - Dakota County Community Development Agency \(dakotacda.org\)](http://dakotacda.org)

Overview

Nicols Pointe is a 24-unit (all one-bedroom/one-bathroom units) apartment building in Eagan that will be affordable to persons aged 55 and up, with a preference for Veterans. All units will be income-restricted for households at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The project will be developed, owned, and operated by the Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA). The estimated project timeline includes:

- **Q2 2023:** Sign final development agreement with City of Eagan and bid out construction.
- **Q3 2023:** Approve construction contract and start construction.
- **Q2 2024:** Start leasing units.
- **Q3 2024:** Receive occupancy certification from City of Eagan and start occupying units.
- **Q4 2024:** Lease 100% of units.

Use of Evidence

Dakota County had an affordable housing shortage prior to the pandemic. In 2016, approximately 26% of all households (40,564 households) in Dakota County were renters with 46% of those households (18,601) earning less than 60% AMI (a one-person household at 60% AMI in 2018 was \$39,660, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). Of those 18,601 renter households, 83% were paying more than 30% of their monthly income on housing and 54% were paying more than half of their monthly income on housing (Minnesota Housing Partnership Market Watch: Dakota County). A household is considered cost-burden if they are

paying more than 30% of income on housing and severely cost-burden if they are paying more than 50% of income on housing.

According to the 2020 Dakota County Comprehensive Housing Needs Analysis (completed prior to the pandemic), an additional 2,330-2,365 units of affordable general occupancy rental units need to be built between 2020-2030 to meet the affordable housing rental demand (Maxfield Research & Consulting).

Performance Report

Work has been completed on development agreements and construction bids.

South St. Paul Library

Identification Number: B30040

Funding Amount: \$11,300,000

Expenditure as of 06/30/2023: \$2,235,600

Expenditure Category: 2.37 Economic Impact Assistance - Other

Website: [New Kaposia Library in South St. Paul | Dakota County](#)

Overview

The library construction project will create the County's tenth branch library location at 131 7th Ave. N. within the City of South St. Paul. This new library, part of the Dakota County Library system, will respond to critical needs in the community, including in the areas of health care, employment, and workforce development. The new building will also provide public access to the internet for purposes including work, education, and health monitoring. This library will support and provide educational and other resources for a community with a median income among the lowest in the county. A high-level project timeline is included below:

- **Q1 2022:** Design approved by Dakota County Board of Commissioners.
- **Q2 2022:** Design complete.
- **Q3 2022:** Bidding for construction project.
- **Q4 2022:** Contractor approved and construction begins.
- **Q1 2024:** Library opens.

Use of Evidence

The City of South St. Paul (SSP) has operated a municipal library for a century. However, maintenance and operational costs have increased to a point where a collaborative agreement would be more beneficial than the library operating independently. In 2021, after studying the specific needs of the SSP community and codifying it into a program, the County Board approved initial steps to assume the city's library into the county library system.

Performance Report

Construction began on September 29, 2022, and is currently about 50% complete. It will conclude in late 2023, with the final touches done in early 2024. Internal fit out and collection installation will occur in early 2024 with a Q1 2024 public opening.

Law Enforcement Center Integrative Health Unit

Identification Number: TBD

Funding Amount: \$15,000,000

Expenditure as of 06/30/2023: \$0.00

Expenditure Category: 1.12 Mental Health Services

Overview

Over the past decade there has been a demonstrated and growing need to provide medical and mental health services to County residents, including inmates housed at the County jail. Despite the fluctuation in inmate population during the COVID-19 pandemic and over-arching changes in the judicial system created by it, a consistent need for dedicated medical and mental health services remains inside the jail. The pandemic increased isolation, stress, and anxiety across the general population, which further highlighted these needs in the jail population. It is now estimated that 15% or more of jail inmates would benefit from dedicated medical or mental health services. Additional research has documented the benefits of providing program and treatment spaces for use by inmates to aid in their active recovery and ongoing treatment.

The Law Enforcement Center Integrative Health Unit Addition, which is planned to break ground in the fall of 2023, has the support of local stakeholders and authorities having jurisdiction. The project proposal has passed all local Planning Commission reviews, has approval of the City of Hastings City Council, and has been reviewed by the Minnesota Department of Corrections. The 30-bed building addition will add capacity to the existing County Jail and will help to meet the demonstrated needs for dedicated medical and mental health spaces.

Use of Evidence

In 2020, Dakota County commissioned a Needs Assessment for the Law Enforcement Center, to explore providing facilities for medical and mental health services inside the jail. The findings from that assessment concluded that a dedicated medical and mental health unit was justified based on documented need and that the most efficient way to achieve the maximum impact was to complete some interior renovation work and to design and construct a building addition.

Performance Report

Work is underway on several requests for proposals for the project.

Revenue Replacement

Project Summary

Identification Number: 8400006100

Funding Amount: \$7,039,825

Expenditure as of 06/30/2023: \$3,614,898

Expenditure Category: 6.1 Provision of Government Services

Overview

Dakota County has funded several projects utilizing revenue replacement funds. A brief description of each is included below.

- **Communities of Color Outreach:** This program established contracts with community organizations to address the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and related hardship on communities of color, with a focus on Black and Latino communities. Contracts focus on the following goals: inform community members about COVID-19 and available resources; assist County residents in navigating support programs and gaining access to services; slowing the spread of COVID-19; supporting recovery from the pandemic; and advising the County’s communication strategies to improve reach and effectiveness with communities of color. Work has been completed with six community agencies.
- **Criminal Courts Backlog:** As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a significant backlog of criminal cases in the Dakota County District Court. The project includes hiring two full time equivalent (FTE) entry-level Assistant County Attorneys and one Legal Administrative Assistant to assist with the backlog of criminal cases and to reduce caseload numbers for criminal prosecutors. The overall goal is a 20% reduction of the criminal court backlog each quarter and ultimately to attain and maintain lower prosecutorial caseload numbers to ensure better public services for victims, witnesses, law enforcement and defendants. During the past quarter, one of the Special Staff Assistants received a permanent position in the office and the remaining six months of the limited term position have not been filled.
- **Customer Relations Management:** Dakota County Employment and Economic Assistance (EEA) has a long-term strategy of providing self-help features for clients to obtain status information about their cases and update changes in household information. The first step of this strategy, and the focus of this project, is to replace an outdated and no longer supported interactive voice response (IVR) software, with a more versatile solution that not only provides IVR features but also call center features that will provide efficiencies for the EEA staff. EEA staff worked on a Request for Proposals (RFP) and identified potential vendors. Current state call flows have been developed for the entire department. These flows will be used to develop the initial IVR design. EEA also worked with Dakota County Information Technology on a related communications project that will provide the contact center solution for this project.
- **Emergency Shelter:** In 2020, Dakota County Social Services significantly increased non-congregate emergency shelter capacity for people experiencing homelessness in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021 and 2022, Social Services sustained this capacity through a variety of funding sources, including federal grant funds, state grant funds, and county levy funds. The focus for this initiative is to provide emergency shelter for youth ages 18-24 and their children through The Link (a non-profit for youth) and single adults ages 21+ through Dakota County in a hotel shelter environment.

- **Law Library Grant:** Funding is being used for a limited-term Assistant Reference Librarian for the Dakota County Law Library to expand access to residents. The pandemic effects on society and constriction of access to courts has exacerbated the need for supporting residents navigating the judicial system. This is happening at the same time as primary revenues through court fees have fallen considerably and staffing levels have been cut. The Dakota County Law Library has stepped in to fill the legal assistance void for those who are unable to afford a private attorney but make too much to qualify for free legal assistance. After some changes in staffing and review of usage data, staff time is being focused at two locations instead of three.
- **Mental Health Civil Commitment Screening:** Funding for 1.0 FTE Social Worker in the pre-petition screening unit to respond to high demand for mandated civil commitment services including screening, court processes, family and collateral engagement, service coordination and case management. Dakota County and other counties continue to experience high demand and high acuity in mental health and substance use services. Referrals for civil commitment screening increased 30% since the start of the pandemic and continue to hold at that level.
- **Municipal Wastewater Connection:** The Municipal Wastewater Connection program is designed for low-income homeowners with failing septic systems who are eligible to make a connection to a municipal wastewater treatment system. The program was designed to accommodate the City of Randolph's unique situation as the city moves from onsite septic systems to a community solution. Outreach to eligible residents started in 2022 and has continued into 2023. The City of Randolph will be constructing the city sewer system in the summer of 2023 with connections to be made in 2024. Project staff expect most requests to be received in late 2023 into 2024.
- **Pre-petition Screens Social Worker:** Hire 1.0 FTE Social Worker in the pre-petition screening unit to respond to high demand for mandated civil commitment services for clients who were also involved in the Rule 20 process through the criminal court. Dakota County and other counties continue to experience high demand and high acuity in mental health and Substance Use services. Referrals for civil commitment screening and Rule 20 referrals increased 30% since the start of the pandemic and continue to hold at that level.
- **Financial Assistance Specialists (Time-Limited):** A fully trained Financial Assistance Specialist can manage public assistance programs for 200-450 households. Due to the COVID Pandemic, public assistance caseloads increased by 35.1% (May 2022). These additional positions will aid in the management of increased public assistance caseloads and help people get the critical services they need in a timely way. Eight positions were filled in August 2022. The Financial Workers were trained on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in two different Department of Human Services training groups. At the start of 2023, the Financial Workers were working independently with support from the unit's lead worker and supervisor and passed their nine-month probation in May 2023.
- **Workforce Mobility Program:** The Dakota County Technical College and Inver Hills Community College collaborated with the Dakota County Employment and Economic Assistance and area CareerForce Centers on a pilot program to provide free tuition in

credit or non-credit training for Dakota County residents in key identified in-demand industry sectors. The program launched with training offered for occupations such as certified nursing assistant, emergency medical technician, phlebotomy technician, Class A commercial truck driving, boiler operations, welding, and early childhood and youth development. The program was marketed to low-income Dakota County residents through direct mailings. The program was met with high demand, with over 200 applications received over a four-month period. In reviewing results thus far, some programs had excellent outcomes while other programs didn't. From this initial experience, there are important lessons learned to make any future program more successful.

- **Aspen House (Youth Shelter):** Following the closure of the shelter in Hastings in 2019, Dakota County and Washington County began partnering to fill this hole in the continuum of safe housing options for youth. Dakota County purchased a 12-bed residential facility located in Mendota Heights to provide temporary emergency housing and support services for youth ages 12 to 18 who do not have a safe place to stay. Washington County contributed \$400,000 of its ARP funding to the purchase and to have priority access to this resource with Dakota County. The facility, named Aspen House, provides 24-hour on-site supervision and support services. After renovations to the space, the Dakota County Board approved the lease of the property to the operating partner, Nexus Family Healing in Q3 2022. Aspen House began serving youth in October 2022. As of the end of Q1 2023, a total of 38 youth had been served at Aspen House.

Use of Evidence

All programs and services in the County provide data at the performance accountability level by providing information on how much they are doing, how well they are doing it, and program impact. This approach covers both process and outcome evaluation. All SLFRF projects are required to use this framework to evaluate their efforts.

Performance Report

Sample evaluation information from programs is included below.

- **Financial Assistance Specialists (Time-Limited):** This unit (SLFRF funded positions plus one additional staff member) are responsible for the SNAP Case bank which is over 4,000 cases and taking additional SNAP applications from Intake. They are also responsible for Phones/Emails, Renewals/Recertifications, Applications/Documents/Reports, processing appeals and screening/interviews for other public assistance programs as requested by the customer during renewal processing.
- **Communities of Color Outreach:** Eight Peer Ambassadors were trained to answer questions from youth about COVID and the vaccine to provide accurate and up-to-date information on COVID-19 vaccine, benefits of vaccination, vaccinations for new refugees and immigrants including community misinformation/concerns, etc., using the #NOJUDGMENT campaign tools to create depolarized conversations about the COVID-19 vaccine among refugee, immigrant, and migrant young people. In addition, three out

of the eight Peer Ambassadors were trained to support those who struggle with mental health, psychological trauma, or substance use.

- **Workforce Mobility Program:** The Dakota County Workforce Mobility Program was recognized by the Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Saint Paul Area Chamber with a Leadership in Local Government Award, the Association of Minnesota Counties and the Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers with the 2022 Outstanding Economic Development, and was promoted by the National Association of Counties as a part of their series for Workforce Development Month highlighting American Rescue Plan workforce investment in manufacturing and technology.
- **Workforce Mobility Program:** Partners from this program provided an update to the Dakota County Board of Commissioners in February 2023. At that time, they had documented 240 applicants for the program. 83 were enrolled in the program and 32 had completed training. Of the 32 that had completed training, it is estimated that 65% were being employed.
- **Criminal Courts Backlog:** Efforts have reduced the active average caseload per general criminal prosecutor from 211 in August 2021 to approximately 127 currently. The average caseload for the drug attorneys is 194 cases. Both averages are too high to be sustainable. Per Court Administration, there is still a criminal case backlog of 30-40%. Work continues to focus on charging cases as efficiently as possible and resolving at the earliest feasible hearing.
- **Aspen House:** Aspen House was named as a finalist for the Dakota County HEROES Award, which recognizes County projects that exemplify excellent service. In addition, Nexus Family Healing and Aspen House were recognized by the Twin Cities Business magazine as a Community Impact honoree.
- **Aspen House:** At the end of Q1 2023, a total of 38 youth has been served at Aspen House since it opened in October 2022. 93% of satisfaction survey respondents rated their care at Aspen House as “favorable” and 92% reported that they “made progress in meeting goals” while at Aspen House.
- **Communities of Color Outreach:** Successfully connected with 593 Street Outreach participants (unsheltered) that were then able to be entered into HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) during this period. Of the 593 individuals 37% identified as black, African American, or African. They were also provided resources and COVID-19 education.
- **Communities of Color Outreach:** As a result of the training “Building Connections: Identifying and Supporting BIPOC Students with Mental Health Challenges,” a follow-up mental health training for teacher licensure at the Friendly Hills Middle School, Mendota Heights, took place and 65 teachers were trained on the Key Warning Signs for Early-

Onset Mental Illness in Children and Adolescents as part of their professional development activities.

- **Emergency Shelter:** In Q2 2023, emergency shelter was provided via The Link to 35 youth ages 18-24 and seven children for a total of 42 individuals. The race/ethnicity of those individuals was 17% white, 69% African American, and 14% other. The permanent exits from the shelter for white individuals was 83% to non-homeless destinations, 62% for African American, and 100% for those identified as other.
- **Emergency Shelter:** In Q2 2023, emergency shelter was provided via hotel shelter to 46 single adults. The race/ethnicity of those individuals was 57% white, 26% African American, and 19% other. The permanent exits from the shelter for white individuals was 90% to none-homeless destinations, 60% for African American, and 50% for those identified as other.
- **Law Library:** In Q2 2023, the Law Library continued to seek engagement opportunities with the residents of Dakota County. As part of the that, the Dakota County Law Library has hosted monthly legal education classes that are open to all. The events were publicized, and hundreds of residents attended.
- **Pre-Petition Screens Social Worker and Mental Health Civic Commitment Screening Social Worker:** In Q1 2023, there were 112 Pre-Petition Screen cases assigned. 24 were Rule 20 cases (both totals significantly higher than Q1 2022). In Q2 2023, there were 101 Pre-Petition Screen cases. The additional social workers are critical for meeting court deadlines, due process, and providing quality services.