



Dakota County
Recovery Plan

**State and Local Fiscal Recovery
Funds**

2024 Report (July 2024)



Dakota County
2024 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 2023 population was 447,440, 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 developed principles for the County’s use of SLFRF funds which include countywide importance and impacts; lasting impact; partnership and coordination; innovation; prevention of program duplication; confidence in the ability to deliver programs and projects as planned; efficient administration; conforming 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. This includes discussions on specific funding requests and planning sessions at meetings including obligation of funds by the end of 2024.

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 Pointe, and a Crisis and Recovery Center. One ongoing challenge encountered by Dakota County has been hiring staff and turnover, 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; prevention of program duplication; confidence in the ability to deliver programs and projects as planned; efficient administration; conforming to County Fiscal Management Principles.

The Board continues to discuss SLFRF funding opportunities and receive updates 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 received an update on SLFRF funding. 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 included 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.
- In November 2023, at County Budget hearings, the Board received an updated on SLFRF funding. The Board also reviewed the 2024-2028 draft Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which included projects utilizing SLFRF funding.
- In December 2023, the County Board adopted the 2024 budget and 2024-2028 CIP which included projects funded with SLFRF.
- In May 2024, the Board received an update on current spending and discussed obligation of funds by the end of 2024.
- 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 and one FTE supervisor to **Dakota County's Crisis Response Unit**. Additional social workers focus on mobile crisis response, responding in pairs and/or with public safety partners. For **Mental Health Crisis Follow-up**, Social Services pairs 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** 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):** 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 converted 10 acres of the former municipal golf course to a regional stormwater treatment system and restored a former wetland and creek complex. Dakota County partnered 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 project is located within qualified census tract number 601.05. The **South St. Paul Library** is the County's tenth library location. This new library, part of Dakota County Library, responds 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** showed 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 and has completed 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 operated both a Tenant Access Program and a Landlord "Portfolio" Program with the ERA funds. The Tenant Access Program utilized Dakota County staff to process applications. The Landlord Program,

also known as the Zero Balance Project, was structured through a joint power's agreement with the Counties of Dakota, Hennepin, and Ramsey and the Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The Family Housing Fund acted as the Landlord Program Administrator. Additionally, Dakota County contracted with community partners to outreach to both tenants and landlords to help create successful and complete applications. Dakota County also contracted with vendors to provide navigation and legal services at eviction court. The Zero Balance Project ended in the Fall of 2022. During the reporting period, Dakota County sunset the Tenant Access Program. Services at eviction court will continue through the end of 2024 using ERA funds.

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.

Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA) administers the HOME-ARP funds on behalf of Dakota County. On February 28, 2024, the Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA) Board of Commissioners approved a contingent award of \$3 million HOME-ARP funds to 360 Communities to construct a new domestic and sexual violence non-congregate shelter. The new shelter will increase capacity from 23 beds to 50 beds, with every unit having full kitchens and bathrooms. This award is contingent on an environmental review, securing all necessary funding to complete the project, and finalizing grant agreement terms.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

The 2023 population for Dakota County is 447,440. In Dakota County, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are over 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 was an initiative that focused 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 included:

- 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.

In addition to the project above, other projects are also focused on addressing equitable outcomes and the impacts of the pandemic. Several examples are included below.

- Efforts related to crisis response and follow-up. Providing a mental health as an alternative to police-only response during a crisis can reduce community/individual trauma and promote long-term health for historically underserved and marginalized communities.
- The Workforce Mobility program was a pilot program that provided free tuition in credit or non-credit training for low-income Dakota County residents in key identified in-demand industry sectors.
- 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).

Additional measurement information is included in the Project Inventory section of the report.

Community Engagement

Historically, Dakota County has used multiple community engagement strategies including surveys, partnerships, meetings, social media, website, and mailed materials. Dakota County staff continue 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 partnered with community organizations to provide important information and resources to communities of color. In another example, Dakota County engaged diverse stakeholder groups to inform crisis services and continuum expansion. This includes work with metro crisis groups to create brief videos to promote use of crisis services with a focus on outreach to communities of color. In another example, Dakota County has engaged with numerous partners for the Crisis and Recovery Center including the City of West St. Paul, people with lived experience, the Local Advisory Council on Mental Health, neighbors, and community service providers.
- **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 they relate to the dollars available to residents. In another example, community/neighborhood outreach and meetings were held related to the Aspen House

youth shelter. In another example, public meetings were held to engage key stakeholders regarding the Crisis and Recovery Center. In yet another example, the Dakota County Law Library hosted monthly legal education classes that were open to all. In another example, Nicols Pointe was highlighted in the City of Eagan's 2024 State of the City address, with more than 150 people in attendance and televised on public access television.

- **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. Planning is underway for the next survey, which will be completed in early 2025. 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 and the Crisis and Recovery Center, email and US postal mail was sent to nearby neighbors and stakeholders to provide updates on progress and an invitation to an open house. For Nicols Pointe, a flyer was produced and sent to contact lists from areas such as Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Minnesota Military Veterans Exchange.
- **Social Media:** Dakota County has a presence on social media, including Facebook, X (formerly 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 3.7 million visits (7.17 million page views) per year.
- **Newsletters:** Aspen House and mental health crisis services were 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 uses 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: \$27,705,766

Total Expenditure as of 06/30/2024: \$17,615,830.64

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.

The new hydropower plant will double the dam's electric production capacity to 4 megawatts. Previously, the dam produced capacity around 1.8 to 2.2 megawatts.

Use of Evidence

The results of a Power Production Study of Byllesby Dam showed the aging turbines, generators, and ancillary components needed to produce electricity had greatly exceeded their operational life. Financial analysis showed that a full turbine upgrade would provide for 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.

The goal is to turn on the new hydropower turbines this fall, with a final connection to the power grid in early 2025. Dakota County is coordinating final stages with Xcel Energy.

River to River Greenway – Thompson Oaks Segment

Identification Number: 8470973130

Funding Amount: \$4,975,265

Total Expenditure as of 06/30/2024: \$4,516,557.24

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

Website: [Trail Planning | Dakota County](#)

Overview

The project converted 10 acres of a former municipal golf course to a regional stormwater treatment system and restored 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 connects 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 lowers 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.

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 project treats approximately 25% of the total impervious land area within the city totaling 216 acres of untreated impervious surface. Prior to the project, levels of total suspended solids exceeded 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.

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 was completed in late 2023 and turned the site into a model regional stormwater treatment system. About 200 dump truck loads of contaminated soil were removed and a natural filtering process was created with wetlands and a creek to clean runoff collected from roughly 25 percent of the city. The project also includes a new segment of the River to River Greenway from Robert Street to Oakland Avenue. This offers a route past a local library and across a 400-foot boardwalk overlooking the restored wetland. In addition, the project recently received an achievement award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Mental Health Crisis Follow-up

Identification Number: 8430021101

Funding Amount: \$997,223

Total Expenditure as of 06/30/2024: \$511,335.78

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. 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.

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 \$511,335.78.

Performance Report

Accomplishments from 2023 are highlighted below.

- 10 of 10 participating public safety agencies have embedded social worker assignments.
- More than 2,256 outreaches that led to engagement and/or service coordination, 639 face to face outreaches or assessments.
- More than 260 cases opened for intensive crisis stabilization services, 30% of referrals from people interested in services or from family members.

2024 Early Accomplishments include:

- Q 1 2024: 431 crisis follow-up outreach intakes were completed. This is a 44% increase from Q1 2023. There were 172 face-to-face assessments complete which is a 20% increase from Q1 2023.
- In addition, the mental health crisis continuum recently received an achievement award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Mental Health Crisis Response

Identification Number: 8430021100

Funding Amount: \$1,470,864

Total Expenditure as of 06/30/2024: \$463,024

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) and one FTE supervisor to Dakota County's Crisis Response Unit. Additional social workers 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.

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 \$463,024.

Performance Report

2023 program accomplishments are included below:

- More than 20,000 incoming calls to the Crisis Response Unit.
- 13,174 intakes/service requests (intakes can include multiple calls), which is a 40% increase in intakes from 2021.
- 992 transfers of certain mental health calls from Dakota 911 to the Crisis Response Unit. More than 80% of 911 call transfers were handled without need for law enforcement response.
- 850 in-person visits from the Crisis Response Unit, which is a 142% increase from 2021.
- In-person response at the time of crisis from professionals trained and skilled in assessing needs and connecting to resources.
- Co-location of Crisis Response social workers in 9 of 12 public safety agencies to build relations and achieve 15 to 30 minute response time.

2024 Early Accomplishments include:

- Q 1 2024: 5,700 inbound calls to the Crisis Response Unit and over 10,000 outbound calls. 400 calls were transferred during this time period. This is a 91% increase in the calls being directed to the Crisis Response Unit from one year ago (Q1 2023 versus Q1 2024). Staff are consistently handling about 80% of the calls without involving law enforcement.
- Also, in Q1 2024, there were 3,399 intakes (an 8% increase from Q1 2023) and 323 face-to-face assessments (a 56% increase from Q1 2023).
- In addition, the mental health crisis continuum recently received an achievement award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Crisis and Recovery Center

Identification Number: 1001299

Funding Amount: \$4,640,072

Total Expenditure as of 06/30/2024: \$147,849.62

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 adult 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 private bathrooms, group and living space for residential treatment level of care. The center will also include a place to go for assessment, support, and connection to resources. The 15,000-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 adults in acute crisis that include a stay from 1-10 days.

The project timeline includes:

- **Summer 2023:** Project planning and selection of construction partner
- **Fall 2023 – Winter 2024:** Construction
- **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

Construction on the project is about half-complete. The building is nearly enclosed and interior work on floors, stairs, and framing is nearly complete. Through summer and fall 2024, work will wrap on the building’s exterior and contractors will start finishing the interior.

Nicols Pointe

Identification Number: DC-1872

Funding Amount: \$9,000,000

Total Expenditure as of 06/30/2024: \$7,835,000

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

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

The building is over halfway complete on the exterior brickwork. The elevator is installed. Most of the first floor is painted, and the dropped ceiling is installed. All apartments are painted, and cabinets are hung. The first move-in date is scheduled for October 1. The CDA has received 748 applications and 12 applicants have been approved to live in the building, all Veterans.

South St. Paul Library (Kaposia Library)

Identification Number: B30040

Funding Amount: \$11,300,000

Total Expenditure as of 06/30/2024: \$9,406,626.12

Expenditure Category: 2.37 Economic Impact Assistance - Other

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

Overview

The library construction project created the County's tenth 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 also provides public access to the internet for purposes including work, education, and health monitoring. This library supports and provides educational and other resources for a community with a median income among the lowest in the county.

Use of Evidence

The City of South St. Paul (SSP) had operated a municipal library for a century. However, maintenance and operational costs 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.

Performance Report

After a design and bidding process in early 2022, construction started on the library in September 2022 and continued throughout 2022 and 2023. The Kaposia Library in South St. Paul opened in February 2024. Since opening, there have been 43,176 visits, 63,288 items checked out, 2,897 computer sessions, 612 meeting and conference room reservations, and they have started to offer Self-Service Hours which allows access to registered customers to the library from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week including holidays. In addition, the library recently received an achievement award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Law Enforcement Center Integrative Health Unit

Identification Number: 1001292

Funding Amount: \$14,400,000

Total Expenditure as of 06/30/2024: \$4,242,133.58

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 broke 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 28-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

Groundbreaking for this project started in fall of 2023. As of summer 2024, construction is about 30% complete. Exterior finishes such as the roof insulation and brick on walls started in July. The project is anticipated to be completed and ready for occupancy in the first quarter of 2025.

Revenue Replacement

Identification Number: 8400006100

Funding Amount: \$7,946,787

Total Expenditures as of 06/30/2024: \$5,559,680.86

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 focused 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 was completed with six community

agencies, and ongoing efforts are now folded in the Public Health department's work on health equity.

- **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 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.
- **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, was to replace an outdated and no longer supported interactive voice response (IVR) software with a more versatile solution. Current state call flows were developed. While ARP funded activities are complete, EEA is now working with Dakota County Information Technology on a related communications project that will provide the contact center solution.
- **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. Since then, Social Services sustained this capacity through a variety of funding sources, including federal grant funds, state grant funds, and county levy funds. The focus 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 to support staffing and 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.
- **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 40% 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. Connections to the new system are planned for 2024.

- **Pre-petition Screens Social Worker:** Hire 2.0 FTE Social Workers in the pre-petition screening unit to respond to high demand for mandated civil commitment services for clients who may also be 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 40% 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 aid in the management of increased public assistance caseloads and help people get the critical services they need in a timely way.
- **Workforce Mobility Program:** The Dakota County Technical College and Inver Hills Community College collaborated with the Dakota County Employment and Economic Assistance, the Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board, 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, some programs had excellent outcomes while other programs didn't. From this 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 gap 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. Aspen House began serving youth in October 2022.

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):** All the Financial Workers remain working independently and sharing the responsibility for the SNAP Case bank (over 4,000 cases) and Public Assistance Intake with support from the unit lead worker and supervisor. The longer this team remains in place the larger the impact they have on the overall workload. Through support of this team as well as a separate initiative, the backlog has come in by 45 days for new applications.
- **Criminal Courts Backlog:** Efforts have reduced the active average caseload per general criminal prosecutor from 211 in August 2021 to approximately 121 in early 2024. The average caseload for the drug attorneys is 157 cases (reduction from approximately 250 in August 2021). While these numbers continue to trend in the right direction, staff want to see the numbers continue to decrease.
- **Aspen House:** Aspen House opened in October 2022. As of February 2024, 81 youth had been served with a 26-day average length of stay. 100% of Community Corrections youth placed on detention status made their initial appearance in court, 51% of youth reunified with their parents following placement at Aspen House, and 91% of residents rated their care at Aspen House as favorable.
- **Municipal Wastewater Connection:** This program is designed to offer funding to those who meet income eligibility who have noncompliant septic systems that can connect. This helps bridge the gap for those who may not be able to afford to connect otherwise. To date, four grant applications have been received and are being evaluated.
- **Emergency Shelter:** In Q3 2023, emergency shelter was provided via The Link to 21 youth ages 18-24 and three children. Hotel emergency shelter was provided to 50 single adults. In Q4 2023, emergency shelter was provided via The Link to 25 youth ages 18-24 and 4 children. Hotel emergency shelter was provided to 68 single adults. In addition, hotel shelter was also provided via Ally to 31 single adults. In Q2 2024, hotel emergency shelter was provided to 48 single adults.
- **Law Library:** The Dakota County Law Library provides a unique and important service to the residents of Dakota County, and it does so at two locations: Hastings and Apple Valley. The presence of a Law Library at two out of three courthouses in Dakota County is rare in Minnesota and provides a valuable service to residents. The primary users are non-attorneys, but the law library works extensively with court staff, judges, law clerks, private attorneys, County Attorney staff and Public Defender staff.
- **Pre-Petition Screens Social Worker and Mental Health Civic Commitment Screening Social Worker:** In Q1 2024, there were 99 Pre-Petition Screen cases assigned. 25 were Rule 20 cases. Referrals continue to remain consistently high, and the additional staff help to meet court deadlines and provide quality services.