

First 5 Fox Valley:

In 2019, Winnebago county passed a resolution (132-042019) committing to investing in young children & families in Winnebago County and states that “research shows that when investment is made in the first 3 years of a child’s life, the returns for the community are the highest, and the need for more expensive interventions later is reduced... an deliver an annual return of up to 13% per child on upfront costs”.

The Help me Grow database is a state-wide model that offers a way to track families and progress on childhood development to eliminate gaps in services and ensure families have all resources available to them. The database tracking is only one piece of the program, navigators then identify areas where additional support could be directed and assist families in accessing those supports. This funding would allow First 5 to expand their capacity and services throughout Winnebago county and offer a more comprehensive program.

ChildCare Resources & Referral (CCR&R):

Similarly, CCR&R has identified ways to address the childcare crisis in Winnebago County.

Childcare centers are struggling to fill staffing positions, labor shortages, low wages and few benefits associated with working in the childcare industry means providers are hiring to fill spots vs. looking for quality staff. Providers are struggling to cover the cost and cover the vacancies to send staff to outside training (which currently is not required for hire). With vacancies, families are either turned away or centers are pushed to capacity causing burnout of the untrained staff.

The request includes expansion of a substitute teacher pool, to allow in-home and group providers temporary assistance to cover for planned and unplanned absence. In-home providers are leaving the field due to the inability to close. They understand the challenges for the families when they need to shut down for illness or planned procedures, when those issues arise, instead of turning to an untrained friend or family member for assistance, the substitute teacher pool would be available. Funding would cover the costs to providers initially and grow into a pay for use program.

CCR&R has seen success of this model in other counties they serve and would like to bring it to Winnebago County.

NEW Mental Health:

Providing wide-ranging assistance to the general public, providers, navigators, law enforcement, behavioral health organizations, etc. This site also serves as a supplement to Winnebago County human services. The majority of the website’s users (72%) are from Winnebago County. The improvements will provide much needed enhancements to the service directory, expand on website design, engagement and implementation to a broad range of users in Winnebago County. Due to an end of year (unexpected) donation, the project would be able to move ahead with the project with a revised request of:

- \$20,000 for year 1
- \$25,000 for year 2
- \$30,000 for year 3

Funding request can be reduced from \$90,000 to **\$75,000**.

The content improvements are a one-time, permanent, and sustainable for high-quality content, design work and integration into the website. The funds will not support the NEW Mental Health Connection, they will support the website improvement. Once completed, the upkeep of the new website features and content will be funded by their existing, annual membership dues.

Tri-County Dental:

Winnebago County residents comprise about 40% of all Tri-County Dental patients, even though the fixed-site clinic is not located in Winnebago County. Tri-County Dental's mobile clinic provides care at their schools to children in 25 Winnebago County schools, removing barriers to them getting care and allowing them to spend more time in the classroom. In 2022, 46% of the children receiving care on the mobile clinic go to school in Winnebago County.

Mobile clinic (dental Bus) costs are around \$200,000 for a custom build-out in the existing ManCave condominium storage facility. We were pleased to hear how creative Tri-County Dental was with this option as it would be a considerable cost savings vs. purchasing land and building from the ground up (quotes were in excess of \$300,000).

Pillars:

The funds would address overdue and underfunded maintenance for the 16 Ascend units that are home to 25 households (all residents of Winnebago County).

While Pillars serves households across the tri-county area, the funds applied for in Pillars' Winnebago Spirit Fund application would be restricted to Ascend (both program and non-program units) located in Neenah. Therefore, all 25 households (totaling 38 people as of today) are Winnebago County residents. This program works with young adults experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges.

We were impressed that Pillars is exploring their sustainability plan in light of some of the funding challenges in the Fox Cities. They've hosted a workgroup to start conversation on partnering with other organizations that specialize in mental health programming, diversifying their revenue streams and displacing some expenses, allowing Pillars to focus on their area of expertise, housing.