



Community Services Division

Update from Assistant County Managers: Marti Fischbach and Gil Acevedo

February 10, 2026

EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Changes to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Due to HR1

H.R. 1 was signed into law on July 4, 2025. There are many impacts on SNAP participants and counties. These include:

- *a financial penalty for any state with a Payment Error Rate (PER) above 6%*
- *loss of administrative funding to the State of Minnesota*
- *expanded work requirement for some recipients*
- *ineligibility for certain lawfully present non-citizens*
- *loss of administrative funding to the State of Minnesota*

While the changes to eligibility for non-citizens was effective upon enactment, typically there is a 120-day exclusionary period to allow states to update policies and procedures at the local level. On November 26, 2025, the Minnesota Attorney General joined 21 other states in filing a lawsuit to block implementation, arguing the federal guidance unlawfully rewrites Congress's rules and threatens thousands of lawful permanent residents with loss of benefits and states with severe financial penalties. Minnesota is waiting on a written order from the court but is also in the process of establishing an implementation timeline for changes to non-citizen eligibility.

Pending the outcome of the federal lawsuit, SNAP will be limited to U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and Compacts Of Free Association residents. Other non-citizens like refugees, asylees, parolees, and trafficking survivors will no longer be eligible. These changes will impact about 240 people in Dakota County. For current participants, the changes will become effective at annual recertification.

Human Services Technology Modernization

On January 21, Dakota County Employment and Economic Assistance (E&EA) in partnership with the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), Olmsted County, and the Minnesota Associations of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA), met with state leaders from Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB), Minnesota Information Technology (Mn.IT), the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Kathleen Walls, Program Trainer Specialist, gave a hands-on walk through of MAXIS and the challenges outdated technology poses for efficient and accurate benefit determination. This was foundational learning for cross-agency leaders whose work impacts these systems but have never accessed them directly. We hope these ongoing "drive-alongs" will strengthen understanding of the need for technology modernization and the importance of collaboration with counties and tribal nations.

On February 4, E&EA hosted Governor Walz for a demonstration and walk-through of MAXIS.

Partial federal government shutdown

The current continuing resolution for the federal budget expired on Friday, January 30, and a partial federal government shutdown began at 12:01 a.m. ET Saturday. This partial government shutdown does not immediately impact the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) programs.

DCYF is monitoring the situation and proactively assessing the possible impacts on programs and services. While a partial government shutdown does not immediately impact DCYF programs, they are seeking guidance from federal partners and evaluating available funding to prepare for the possibility of a longer-term shutdown. It's important to note that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is not impacted by this potential shutdown. After the recent federal shutdown this past fall, SNAP was funded through September 2026. We will update you as information becomes available.

Contact for any of the above items: Dana DeMaster, Employment & Economic Assistance Director, at 651-554-5953 or Dana.DeMaster@co.dakota.mn.us.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Q 4, 2025 Community Living Services Satisfaction Results

A survey of Dakota County Social Services Community Living Services clients shows overall high satisfaction with services, including case management. The survey was distributed to 1,232 individuals between August and October. A total of 328 surveys were completed.

Intake Process

Overall satisfaction increased to an average of 4.00 out of 5, an upward trend.

Knowledge of intake staff remained the highest-rated aspect of the process.

Assessment and Reassessment

Average satisfaction increased to 4.31 out of 5, reinforcing assessment as a core strength.

Most respondents rated **assessor knowledge and clarity of information** as "Excellent" or "Good".

Case Management

Overall quality ratings increased to 4.49 out of 5, reflecting high and continued growth in satisfaction.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents reported their **family's well-being** as "much better" after receiving support and resources.

A larger proportion of clients indicated that they **know who to contact with questions or concerns (88.9%)**

90% or more of respondents reported that:

- **Their needs and preferences were valued.**
- **Their Case Manager is responsive when assistance is needed.**
- **Their Case Manager is knowledgeable about available services and resource options.**

Q 4, 2025 results affirm that Dakota County is delivering high quality, person-centered services that meaningfully improve client and family well-being.

Contact: Emily Schug, Social Services Director, at 651-554-6316 or Emily.schug@co.dakota.mn.us

VETERANS SERVICES

New Twin Cities Vet Center

The St Paul Vet Center has changed its name and moved to Dakota County! The new Twin Cities Vet Center is now located in Eagan at 2113 Cliff Road, Suite 100. Dakota County Veterans Services is excited to have this important resource located in the county and is looking forward to partnering with Vet Center staff on outreach, support, and community events.

Vet Centers, part of the Veterans Administration (VA), offers free, confidential counseling and support for veterans, military service members, and their families. Services focus on issues like PTSD, military sexual trauma (MST), and depression. Vet Center counselors and outreach staff are located on site and can serve walk-ins or clients with an appointment. Vet Centers specialize in serving those returning from combat and offer unique services to individuals, couples, and families of military service members. Although part of the VA system, Vet Centers keep confidential records that are separate from VA medical records. Vet Center staff also work in conjunction with county staff to support veterans by connecting them to benefits and community resources.

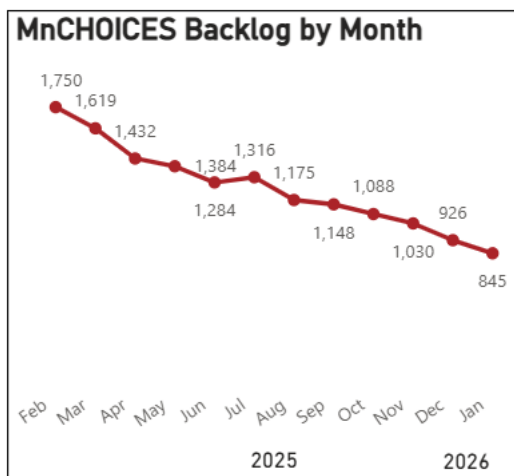
A grand opening celebration is coming in the summer of 2026.

Contact: Lisa Thomas, Veterans Services Director, at 651-554-5631 or Lisa.Thomas@co.dakota.mn.us.

MnCHOICES BACKLOG BY MONTH

Dakota County Community Living Services intake team receives 300+ new inquiries each month and through process efficiencies and additional staffing continues to decrease the number in the queue as well as the wait time for an assessment, which is now at 4.5 months.

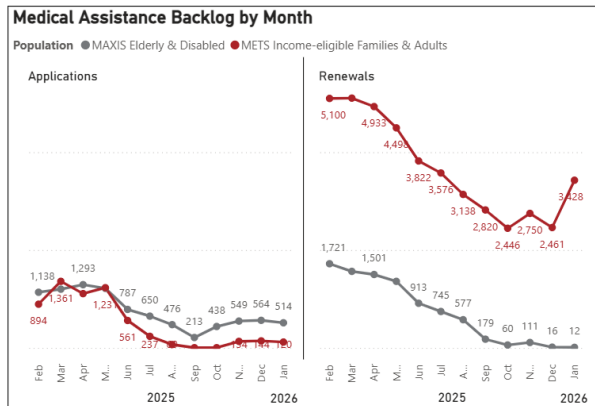
Contact: Katherine Kreager-Pieper at 651-554-5849 or Katherine.Kreager-Pieper@co.dakota.mn.us



MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BACKLOG BY MONTH

Dakota County E&EA backlog for Medical Assistance is showing an increase in METS renewals. This increase is due to the high renew volumes during Open Enrollment and clients returning their renewals late. MAXIS MA continues to show a slow decrease. We continue to improve and streamline processes through our Service Delivery Initiative, new MA workflows and OnBase updates, which are scheduled to be done end of quarter one 2026.

Contact: Tiffinie Miller at 651-554-5610 or Tiffinie.Miller@co.dakota.mn.us



HOUSING SERVICES DATA

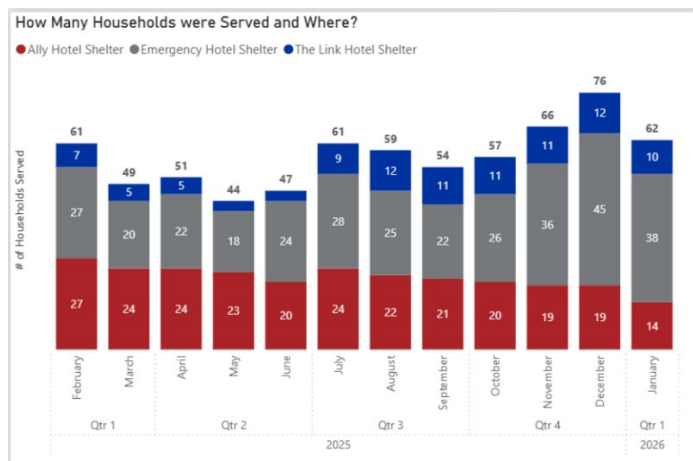
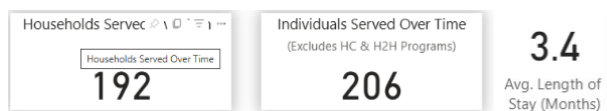
Monthly reports will include emergency housing (shelter) data. Quarterly reports will include all housing services areas.

Emergency housing data will be presented as a rolling 12-month chart.

Singles Hotel Emergency Housing (Shelter)

Programs include Dakota County, Ally and The Link.

Ally's program is sunsetting and will be closed on March 1, 2026.



Contact: Madeline Kastler, Social Services Deputy Director, at 651-554-5918 or Madeline.Kastler@co.dakota.mn.us