

Request Item: 43-APS
Program Name: 2.0 FTE Lead Social Workers (1.0 in Guardianship/Protective Placement Unit & 1.0 in Adults at Risk (AAR) Unit)
Expenditure Amount: \$254,600
Funding Source: LEVY ASK
Funding Change: \$254,600

Request Description: The Adult Protective Services unit of the Disability and Aging Services Division has historically lacked the organizational structure and support needed for the capacity of work that has exponentially increased over the period of the last six years. In all other human service units across the department there are at least 2 managers, 2 supervisors and multiple lead workers to support the operational needs of the unit. APS has one manager, 2 Supervisors for 20 staff, and no lead workers to support the unit. The recommended number of direct reports per Supervisor to be effective is 7. APS exceeds this number. After consultation with unit leadership and staff, they are requesting to first meet these additional needs by developing existing staff opportunities for promotion through Lead Social Worker positions for which they currently have none prior to expanding any managerial roles. This Division Administrator is in agreement with this recommendation.

The population of persons over 60 years of age in Dane County is only increasing which will directly impact the work of both APS Units. In 2010, the U.S. Census and Wisconsin Department of Administration reported 15.4% of persons in Dane County were 60 years or older. That number will jump to 23.6% in 2030 and 25.2% by 2040. In addition, in 2022 the Department of Health Services reported that there were 23,995 persons between the ages of 18-64 with a disability in Dane County making them a “vulnerable adult” by statute (Wis.Stat.55.01 (1e)). APS needs to position itself to be able to respond in the changing demographics of our county. Building in the role of 2.0 FTE Lead SW’s, one for each unit, will help address the anticipated growth in vulnerable adults in our community and to better support those APS staff on the front lines responding to the needs of those vulnerable adults. These positions reflect Dane County Department of Human Services Mission Statement by providing effective services and resources that support wellbeing, opportunities to thrive, safety and justice to persons of all backgrounds.

Adults At Risk Unit Justification: Since 2018 the Adults at Risk/Elder Abuse unit has grown from a staff of six to a staff of ten including five AAR investigators, three Helpline Intake Specialists, and two victim advocates. Increased staffing in AAR has been supported in the 2024 and now proposed 2025 department budget due to increases in the number of contacts made to APS via the Helpline, the amount of time spent screening contacts made to the Helpline to determine if a report needs to be taken, and the overall number of reports investigated, particularly those involving dementia. While the intensity and amount of work done by AAR investigators, Helpline Intake Specialist and Victim Advocates has increased the capacity of the AAR Supervisor to support these staff has not.

A 1.0 FTE Lead SW is being requested for the following reasons:

- APS Manager is working an additional 8-12 hours per week to cover the work of Supervisors that they are unable to accomplish given their increased workloads.
- A 30% increase in the number of staff supervised by Adults at Risk Supervisor in last 4 years making it more challenging for AAR Supervisor to manage the needs and support of staff and AAR unit as a whole
- To increase capacity of expertise and knowledge about AAR beyond just the AAR Supervisor.
- To assist the AAR Supervisor with the training of AAR staff

- To be a formalized resource of support and consultation to staff when AAR Supervisor is off/ill or, otherwise, not available
- To assist in the screening of Family Care Model program reports to AAR
- To provide a promotional opportunity within APS
- Create additional case load capacity as the Lead AAR SW would carry a small case load of investigations in addition to their other duties

For these reasons, a 1.0 Lead Social Worker added to the Adults at Risk unit will result in the following:

- Knowledge and expertise of the AAR Unit procedures, systems and functions, etc. are expanded beyond the AAR Supervisor.
- Staff provided with additional consultation & training support beyond AAR Supervisor which is formalized and part of AAR organizational structure
- AAR Supervisor has formalized assistance with screening reports, consulting with Family Care Model long term care programs, etc.
- Create additional case load capacity as the Lead AAR SW would carry a small case load of investigations in addition to their other duties
- A promotional opportunity is created
- APS Manager is no longer the only primary back up of support for AAR Supervisor
- AAR Supervisor will have additional time to be a more visible and consistent presence with community partners who interface with AAR related issues. Doing so will also help alleviate some of this responsibility from the APS Manager who has taken on some of these duties as a way to support AAR Supervisor given their full plate of duties.

Adult Guardianship/Protective Placement 1.0 FTE Lead SW justification:

The Dane County Adult Protective Services (APS) Adult Guardianship Program (AGP) is driven by WI Statutes Ch. 54 ([WI Statute Chap 54](#)) and 55 ([WI Statute Chap 55](#)). . Using these statutes as their guide, AGP social workers and staff are tasked with assessing complex and often challenging situations for which it needs to be determined if a vulnerable adult is in need of a guardian (of person and/or estate). Additionally, they also assist in assessing if these same vulnerable adults may be in need of protective placement based on WI Statute Chapter 55)

The increase in the workload of AGP social workers has had a direct impact on the work of the AGP Supervisor and the demands on their time. While the AGP Supervisor is extremely knowledgeable it is not in the best interest of the unit that so much content and unit oversight be in one position. In order for AGP to grow and build both expertise and capacity a Lead AGP SW is needed for the following reasons:

- When the AGP Supervisor is out of the office, Assistant Corporation Counsel staff, APS Manager and community staff may experience a delay in case consultation and assessment of vulnerable individuals who may need a guardian.
- Due to Supervisor's workload the APS Manager is completing tasks normally completed by Supervisors in other units.
- Vulnerable adults deemed incompetent by a physician are at risk while on the Community Referral waiting list because there is not adequate case load capacity among AGP social workers to whom these individuals can be assigned

- AGP Supervisor will have less time to develop new programs/resources within AGP due to demands on time supporting AGP staff, responded to consultation requests, etc.
- Newly hired staff may have a decreased ability in job shadowing and learning from peers.
- Lack of professional growth opportunity in AGP Unit

By hiring a 1.0 Lead Social Worker for the Adult Guardianship Program, the following will occur:

- Additional capacity for case consultation with AGP staff and community partners. Such consultations are necessary and needed more frequently due to the increased complexity of individuals and the system of support for vulnerable adults to ensure the best decisions and interventions are considered based on statutes.
- Appropriate supervisory responsibilities currently done by Manager can be assigned to Supervisors like in other units across the department.
- Formalized back up position for APS Supervisor when they are out allowing staff to have an identified resource in the AGP Supervisor's absence.
- Increased capacity to provide community education and training to partners who interface with AGP
- Additional support in onboarding new staff, improving unit work flow and developing/updating unit policies, manuals and protocols.
- Increased case load capacity as the Lead AGP Social Worker will be expected to have a small case load in addition to their other duties.