

In The Know, UDMO: January 2025



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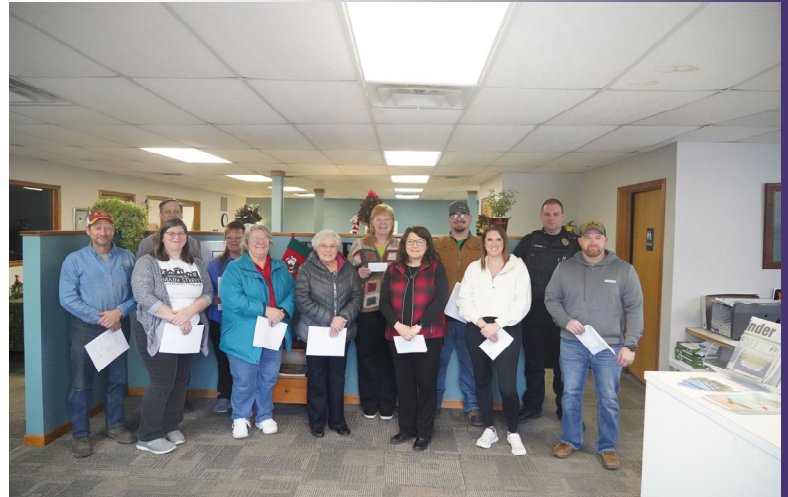
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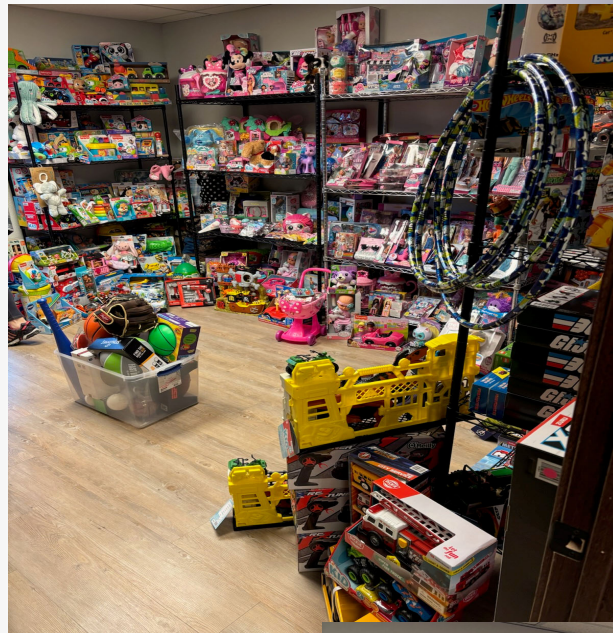
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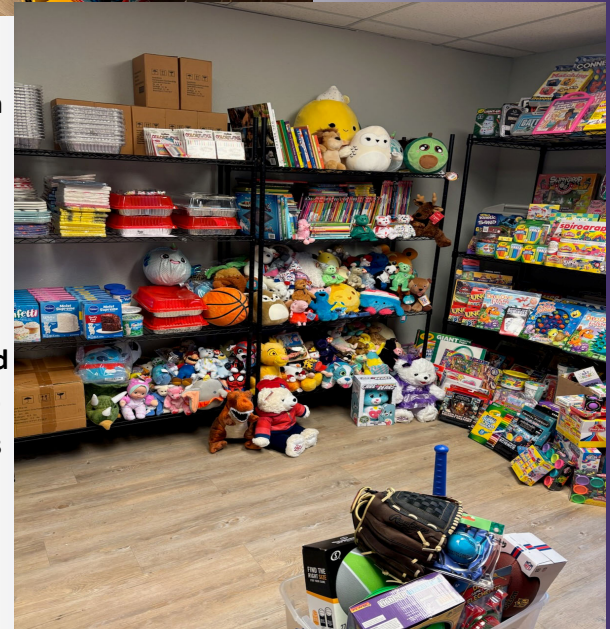


Here is a shot of Kyle Dietrich-Weatherization Director, (far right) accepting the Unifund donation.



Check out the Birthday Room at Clay Outreach! As you can see they are fully stocked! Deb Harris Fiscal Clerk, Dawn Hoffman Admin. Assistant, Ashley DeMoss HR Mgr. and Tiffany Harris HR Director had a great time a few weeks ago unpacking and setting up this room.

WOW!



2025 All-Staff Training

September 18th

The Shores

Emmetsburg

Executive Director Report by Julie Edwards



December Highlights:

Outreach Activities:

- Central Office staff and I enjoyed giving a helping hand at many of our Outreach offices. It was a joy to provide assistance, get to see the tremendous work UDMO does and build relationship with those staff members.
- Spencer Outreach moved back into their office in south Spencer! Thank you to the many volunteers from the community of Spencer and our own UDMO team!! Contractors are finishing up while Dawn and Terri are continuing to unpack and organize. Open house will be planned in the future as we need to get settled. We also continue to work with FEMA.

Legislative Discussions & Advocacy:

- In December three of our UDMO Board members participated in a statewide discussion facilitated by Iowa Community Action Agency Director in an effort to assist ICCA develop advocacy points for the upcoming legislative session.
- **All UDMO board members are invited** to join Executive Directors of Community Action Agencies and Head Start Directors at a Legislative Breakfast in the Legislative Dining Room at the Iowa State Capital on **March 11 from 8 – 10am**
- **FaDSS Day on the Hill is scheduled for Feb 4th.**

Grant Updates:

- **Shared Visions Preschool and Parent Support Grant:** Continue to be listed as delayed.

2025 Stay Survey Results:

- **THANK YOU TO THE 164 employees out of 166 for responding! WOW!!**
- Here is a quick overview of employee satisfaction.
- UDMO Directors will be reviewing comments to look for trends as we continually strive to make positive changes and update the agencies Strategic Plan.
 - **How often do you look forward to coming into work?**
 - Never 1 (.50%)
 - Rarely 3 (1.9%)
 - **Often 93 staff (56.7%)**
 - **Always 40 staff (24.4%)**
 - **How often do you receive recognition for your achievements?**
 - Never 5 (3.1%)
 - Rarely 22 (13.7%)
 - **Sometime 64 (40%)**
 - **Often 57 (35.6%)**
 - **Do you feel you have the opportunity to grow?**
 - Definitely Not 3 (1.8%)
 - Probably Not 21 (12.9%)
 - **Neutral 71 (43.6%)**
 - **Probably 38 (23.2%)**
 - **Definitely 30(18.4%)**

Save the Dates:

- **Finance Committee on January 21 @ 1 pm.**
 - Monthly Financials
 - Contracts & Amendments
- **UDMO Board of Directors on January 28 @ 5 pm.**



Executive Director-Continued:

- **UDMO Leadership Training** continues as we will be working with Sarah Ennis from Spark Point for our second year. The team will meet @ Central Office on 1/30, 2/28, 3/27, 4/24 and 5/22.
- **All Staff Training set for September 18 at the Shores in Emmetsburg.**

KIDS PROGRAM

KOMMUNITY, INVOLVEMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT



SUCESSES/CHALLENGES

- Awarded CPPC/DECAT Dollars for Lakes Region for Youth Activity and Car Repair for Clay, Dickinson, Osceola and O'Brien families.
- Dickinson Back to School Night was a success and we ran out of promotional items!
- 25th Tacos for Tots Event in Algona was well attended by community members raising approximately \$5,000 for activities within the community.

SERVICES UPDATE

- Home Visit Observations are completed for the first quarter.
- Applied for Technical Assistance to begin in February, for our Credential scheduled for 2026. Stay tuned for your chance to participate!

COMMUNITY MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES

- Dolls and Trucks
- Tacos for Tots
- Dickinson Back to School Night
- Prevent Child Abuse Iowa Local Council Meetings: FLAC, CAC, Kossuth, Emmet/Palo Alto

STAFF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Congratulations to Christine Orenday and Heidi Malm for 6 months of service with the KIDS Program! Thank you for your hard work!

 jhansen@udmo.com

 712-363-8466

 <https://www.facebook.com/iowakidsprogram/>

1st Five ~ January 2025

Healthy Mental Development in the 1st Five Years!

Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc.

CSA-4 ~ Meredith Mickelson, ph: (712) 298-6292, mmickelson@udmo.com

Serving Calhoun, Hamilton, Hardin, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster, & Wright Counties

10 New
Referrals in
December 2024

FY25 Referrals= 59

07/01/24 - 12/31/2024
children birth up to 5th birthday

Provider Identified Reasons for 1st Five Referral

- Financial Resources
- Community Resource Connections
- Transportation Concerns
- Social Stressors
- Speech Delay
- Developmental Delay
- Behavior Concerns
- Parenting Support
- Daycare Support
- Applying for insurance
- Family Social Stressors
- Developmental Assessment
- Nutrition Concerns

December 2024

6 Referring Clinics

6 Referring Providers

Hamilton County:

• **Iowa Specialty Clinic - Webster City**

- Fawn Roberts, ARNP

Hardin County:

• **McFarland Clinic-Iowa Falls**

- Andrea Bartling, PA-C

• **Iowa Falls Clinic**

- Sarah Scott, ARNP

Humboldt County:

• **UnityPoint Family Medicine-Humboldt**

- Dr. Cassidy Long, DO

Webster County:

• **UnityPoint Pediatrics-Fort Dodge**

- Molly Schilling, ARNP

Wright County:

• **UnityPoint Family Medicine-Eagle Grove**

- Charity Hayes, ARNP

CSA-1 ~ Teresa Ball, ph: (712) 298-6751, tball@udmo.com

Serving Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, O'Brien, Osceola, & Palo Alto Counties

6 New Referrals
in December

38 Total Referrals
thus far
in FY2025

End of 2024
CSA-1
worked with
14
Clinics
with
28
Referring
Providers

December Referral Reasons:

- Speech Delay
- Parent Education
- Home Visiting
- Food Insecurity
- Energy Assistance
- Clothing requests
- Household goods

FY 2025 Overall

Reasons for referrals
into 1st Five, CSA-1

- 32% developmental delays
- 29% Resource needs
- 24% Parent/Family Stress
- 11% Other Health Related
- 3% Behavioral
- 3% Hearing/Speech Concerns

Happy
New Year
2025

JANUARY SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

1 YEAR OF SERVICE:

MARLEN GRACIA - ASSISTANT TEACHER @ STORM LAKE
EMILY HAYES - OUTREACH SPECIALIST @ POCAHONTAS
ALISSA MICK - ASSISTANT TEACHER @ JEFFERSON

2 YEARS OF SERVICE:

JANAE COE - HOME BASED TEACHER @ EMMET
MEREDITH MICKELSON - 1ST FIVE COORDINATOR
GLENNY RAMIREZ- HERNANDEZ - INTERPRETER @ EMMET

3 YEAR OF SERVICE:

ISABELLA CLINTON - ASSISTANT TEACHER @ EMMET
DEB HARRIS - ACCOUNTING CLERK @ CENTRAL
KANANIE STOUT - EHS TEACHER @ EMMET

4 YEARS OF SERVICE:

MICKELLE GROTHAUS - ASSISTANT TEACHER @ SHELDON

5 YEARS OF SERVICE:

MARGARET LOVING: EHS TEACHER @ STORM LAKE

6 YEARS OF SERVICE:

JOHN BEYER - HOME AUDITOR
CANDACE KALTVED - HOME BASED TEACHER @ EMMET

7 YEARS OF SERVICE:

TIM CARLIN - HOME AUDITOR

8 YEARS OF SERVICE:

ELAINE BREHMER - SUBSTITUTE @ EMMET
ALICIA KOPPMAN - TEACHER @ EMMET

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
DEDICATION TO UDMO**

JANUARY SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

10 YEARS OF SERVICE:

JENNY EIDE - ASSISTANT TEACHER @ EMMET

11 YEARS OF SERVICE:

ELIZABETH MEYER - TEACHER @ LAURENS

12 YEARS OF SERVICE:

TOM TINDALL - CUSTODIAN @ CENTRAL

14 YEARS OF SERVICE:

KYLE DIETRICH - WEATHERIZE DIRECTOR @ EMMETSBURG

17 YEARS OF SERVICE:

AMBER CAGLE - SUBSTITUTE @ SPENCER

19 YEARS OF SERVICE:

VANESSA ODENS - FOOD SERVICE @ SIBLEY

24 YEARS OF SERVICE:

DEE GRAETTINGER - ECP COORDINATOR @ SPENCER

29 YEARS OF SERVICE:

JULIE EDWARDS - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JANINE HUSS - HOME BASED COACH @ JEFFERSON

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
DEDICATION TO UDMO**

Congratulations!

Employee of the Month

Tara Carney - Assistant Teacher @ Spencer

Tara is always willing to give a helping hand to a classroom that is needing extra help or hands. She helps in our classroom by transitioning the children and understanding their needs. Tara has stepped in both roles as teacher and assistant teacher.



Tara takes it upon herself to organize, keep busy, and help where is needed. She has a smile on her face and is willing to step in. She is very dependable and reliable employee.

I appreciate when Tara had a work day, she took it upon herself to clean and organize in our classroom to make the transition of coming back after the holiday break more smooth for both the teachers and children. We appreciate her help at Head Start.

Becky Carlin– CACFP Coordinator



CACFP (Child & Adult Care Food Program) In Home

Monthly Board Report:

Counties Served: Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, and Sioux.

CACFP had 37 providers submit claims for December. I think that the numbers below are interesting in the fact that 1 year ago I had the same number of providers, yet the meal counts are higher this year. One of the things that I attribute this to is that I currently have 6 providers that have applied for through HHS and received Exception to Policy waivers. These waivers allow providers to care for additional children over and above the maximum capacity of their license.

My numbers are getting so low that I am monitoring my budget very closely and will continue to do so.

CACFP In-home Providers served the following meals in December:

	December 2024	December 2023
Breakfast:	4,339	4,175
Lunches:	4,367	4,235
Snacks:	5,072	5,032
Suppers:	10	125
Total Meals Served:	13,788	13,567

Providers Served: 37 37

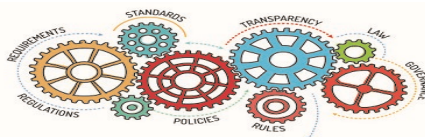
Shelly Charapata– Energy Program Director



- Liheap (Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program) starts Oct. 1st for a household with an elderly (60 years of age or older) and/or a disabled household member. Also, any household in a crisis related situation may apply for Liheap in October. Everyone else can apply Nov. 1st thru April 30th.
- **LIHEAP APPLICATIONS:** For December, Outreach took and processed 646 Liheap applications. 31 applications were denied. 5 online applications.
- **YTD TOTALS:** From 10-01-2024 to 12-31-2024: Total Liheap applications processed 3,106.
- **CRISIS:** For December, 10 households received ECIP-Crisis funds in the amount of \$3,717.55.
- At this time, we are not assisting with crisis for Service Continuity, due to applicants are protected from being disconnected from the Moratorium. Also, have not assisted with furnace repair/replacement crisis for homeowners due to the new State System and available funding. Will see later if able to assist with this or not.
- We are working on a new State Liheap System.

We are working on our regular contract called Liheap-24 Crisis contract.

Shakira Meyer – Director of Program Development, Compliance & Reporting



Many County Community Foundations run their grant application cycles between October and March annually. Therefore, the previous few months and the next couple months have been busy:

- attending grant informational meetings
- partnering with program directors and front line staff to identify programmatic and facility needs
- gathering required data to support the identified needs
- securing quotes and bids
- submitting grant requests

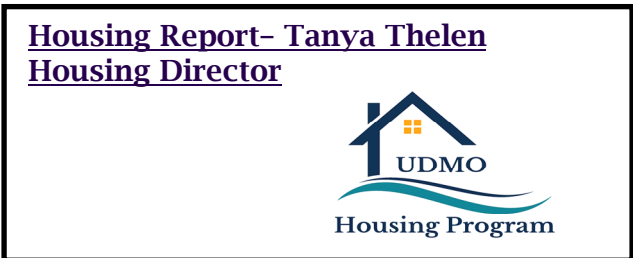
As an organization, UDMO continues to apply for funding to meet the ongoing and emerging needs including:

- flood recovery/repairs at Clay County Outreach
- restocking food pantries,
- providing client services at Outreach,
- improving ADA related accessibility at Outreach facilities and
- updating kitchen facilities with Head Start
- starting garden projects at Head Start sites

Thank you to the tremendous team who partner with me to work through each of these grants to ensure we have the required information and submit the applications in a timely manner.

UDMO Funding Requests Update:

Recent Foundation/Organizational/Trust Grants Submitted & Status: January 2025	County	Program	Submitted/ Pending	Awarded	Not Funded
William Morrison Trust	HA	Client Services	X	X	
Pocahontas County Community Foundation	PO	Outreach Accessibility	X	X	
Farm Credit Services America	HA	Food Pantry	X	X	
Dickinson County Good Neighbor Fund	DI	Outreach	X		
Homeland Security – EM FEMA Grant	CL	Repairs – App in Process	X		
GroMoreGood Garden Grant	EM PA	Head Start Gardens	X		
PAGDC – Mini Grant	PA	Outreach Accessibility	X		
PAGDC – Full Grant	PA	CO Conference Room A/V	X		
Humboldt County Community Foundation	HU	Client Services	X		
Clay County Community Foundation	CL	HS Jefferson Kitchen	X		
DNR Food Storage Grant	WE HA EM OS	Energy Star Rated Freezers or Refrigerators for sites	X		



Households assisted:

<u>ESG</u> 2	<u>ERA</u> 10	<u>TBRA</u> 24	<u>RSA</u> 15
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Annual Point-In-Time Count also known as PIT Count

In order to gain a better understanding of homelessness in our communities, our staff will be conducting a census of the homeless population called a Point in Time Count as required annually by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Upper Des Moines Opportunity, Inc. (UDMO) is the Designated Lead Agency for the annual Point-In-Time Count covering 12 counties in Iowa: Dickinson, Emmet, Clay, Palo Alto, Buena Vista, Pocahontas, Humboldt, Wright, Sac, Calhoun, Webster and Hamilton. We will travel through the region on January 29th and 30th, looking for any individuals that appear to be homeless (such as in cars, tents, parks, on the streets, etc.). The data collected affects Iowa’s funding allocations from the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

On January 29th or 30th if you notice, encounter, or are aware of any homeless individuals within our service region, please contact me, at 515-269-7105 to report the number of homeless individuals. If this is a person you have interacted with, please urge them to call me directly. Observational data including the person’s name, gender, age, race and county is helpful, but not required.

It’s important to note that to be included in the count individuals must meet the definition of literally homeless which means the person slept in a place not meant for human habitation on the night of January 29th. (Car, streets, tents, outdoors, homeless shelters, shelter with no heat or electricity, park bench, barn, etc.) We cannot count those who sleep on a friend’s couch.

Staff/Client Success Stories

I met up with a middle-aged man who had been living in his truck for a month or so. One night while sleeping in his truck the vehicle started on fire (electrical). All his worldly possessions were destroyed. Within a few days we had secured a one-bedroom apartment. We furnished it with a donation/voucher from a thrift store in Spencer. He was able to get some clothing as well. With our help he was able to replace his social security card, ID and apply for SNAP and Housing. After moving into his apartment, he got to know the manager, she put him to work doing small maintenance projects. This built his self-esteem and gave him a little money.

The client is now working on getting social security disability with the help of a local attorney specializing in disability.

Statewide Crisis Line Update: Clients in need of rental assistance should call the Statewide Crisis Line at 1-833-739-0065 to complete the intake process. Normal business hours are 7am – 8pm. Clients calling outside of these hours will need to leave a message and wait for a call back. Call backs are being made within 24-48 hours.

0-5 Early Childhood– Sarina Smith



Enrollment:

Fully enrolled in Early Head Start with 183 children and Head Start Preschool with 289 children.

Disabilities:

Early Head Start students served on IFSP's: 14

Head Start Preschool students served on IEP's: 23

Total served: 37 Target: 47

TEACH – CDA, 2 year or 4-year Degree:

CDA certification completion: 4

Associates degree in progress: 1

Bachelor degree in progress: 1

Coaching:

Teachers – 6 and Home Base Teachers – 3

What's Happening:

- *As the Director, one of my greatest joys is visiting classrooms and spending time with our amazing teachers and students. These moments remind me of the incredible work being done daily to nurture and inspire our children. Thank you to all our staff for your dedication and passion—it truly makes a difference in our community. I look forward to seeing you all in this new year!*
- We have had the pleasure of welcoming IQ4K nurses to several of our sites recently. Their visits have been focused on promoting health and safety, ensuring that we continue to provide a secure and nurturing environment for the children and families we serve. We appreciate their guidance and commitment to supporting our programs.
- Recruitment for our programs will officially begin in January! Each of our program coordinators is actively revamping their recruitment plans to better meet the unique needs of our community. We're excited to implement these enhanced strategies and connect with families to share the incredible opportunities available through our programs.
- We are excited to announce that Beth, Program Specialist for the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Region VII, will be visiting our sites on February 25th and 26th. During her visit, Beth will also join us at our Policy Council meeting, offering an excellent opportunity for collaboration and insight. We look forward to welcoming her and showcasing the amazing work happening across our sites.

During the month of December, Storm Lake Head Start and Home Visitor Staff collected food items to give back to the local UDMO outreach.



Tiffany Harris– HR Director



HR MONTHLY NEWS

- **Our Wellness Program runs from 10/01-9/30 each year. Any employee that completes the Wellbeing Survey and 80 out of the 100 points available will be entered into a raffle drawing for 8 hours of vacation time at the conclusion of our program year September 2025.**
- **January 2025 Challenge: No Dollar Days (daily task challenge)**
 - **Registration: January 6 – January 26**
 - **Challenge Date: January 20 – February 16**
 - **Participation Incentive: UDMO ¼ Zip Sweatshirt (Heather Royal)**

STAY Survey Feedback:

- “I love teaching, I look forward to seeing the children in my room light up when they see me and when they are learning. I find great joy in creating a classroom with love, care and a sense of safety. I have enjoyed working with certain coworkers as we have a great working relationship, and I have really enjoyed the collaboration that I am able to have this year. Teaching is a hard profession because when they are in your room; you are their everything until they go home each day.”
- “One of the biggest reason's that I enjoy coming to work is because I feel valued and appreciated.”
- “I enjoy meeting with families and being able to help assist them in areas they may be struggling. I enjoy seeing the smiles on their face, and how grateful they are for the support. I also enjoy spending time with coworkers, and being able to support one another.”
- “Knowing I can make a difference in someone's life when they are struggling. Life isn't easy and working for UDMO and being able to help people is why I love my job.”

Work Comp Incident Report Recap:

In order to keeps our rates from rising, our goal is to provide a safe working environment to keep these incident reports to a minimum and avoid preventable work comp claims.

- October 2024: 3 incidents
- November 2024: 1 incident
- December 2024: 0 incidents
- Incident YTD Total: **30**
- Work Comp Claim YTD Total: **2**

Thank you to all for working so diligently to keep a safe working environment!

When safety concerns do arise, be sure to share them with a member of the Safety & Wellness committee.

Kyle Dietrich-Weatherization Director



“Weatherization Report for December 2024”

Number of Families Served in December 2024: **10**

Number of Families Served in FY 2024:

Goal for 2024: **110 Homes- Actual Completed Homes 118**

Weatherization Update:

The Weatherization Department for the month of December was another great month we completed another 10 homes and a grand total of 118 homes exceeding our goal for the year. Not much to talk about for the month of December besides that starting in 2025 we will be getting our new contracts and I will send those dollar amounts in the next month’s report. We will also be starting our flat rate pricing on January 17th 2025 for insulation contractors ONLY to see if that helps with material and labor cost on our client’s home. This is a new requirement that the DOE (Department of Energy.) So, we will be starting this soon and we will see at the end of the year how this is beneficial or not with budgets moving forward.

Until then we will continue to push hard and create results and effectively assist our clients with their energy needs on their homes in our 17-county area that we serve.



Alisa Schlieff– Family & Community Services Director



FaDSS:

December 2024

Number of Families Served: for December 2024 73 families

Year to Date Families Served: July 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024: 93 families

FaDSS completed the On-site review during the month of December. Our FaDSS team is doing a lot of great work and making positive impacts on the lives of the families in our service area. There were also some areas that as a team we are more focused on and going to work to even be better at!

Outreach:



Outreach continue to do LIHEAP for all eligible families. Families can call the office for an appointment, schedule their own appointment on our website or complete the online application.



Our Clay County Outreach office has officially moved back into our office space that was devastated during the floods. It has taken an army of contractors, volunteers and team work to get this all completed. This all would not have been possible with out a lot everyone working together!

Congratulations!

At the end of December our Outreach Team will be losing a team member that has been such a huge asset to our team. **Dianna Georg** will be retiring after about 20 years with UDMO. Our team, UDMO and the families will miss her!! Di we wish you the best of luck on this next chapter and do not be a stranger!!



At this time **Outreach has 2 open positions**. We are hiring for the part time position in Pocahontas (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) and the part time position in O'Brien (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday).



December OUTREACH

Holiday Food: 1,006 households
and 2,077 individuals

Santa for Seniors: 256 households
and 287 individuals

Adopt a Family: 724 households
and 1,906 individuals

Bikes for Tikes: 230 children

Food Services: 2,286 households,
4,392 individuals, and 15, 213 total
food services

**Total Monetary Donations for
December: \$112,000**