



WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2023



Know Your Numbers

9-1-1

Medical Emergencies
Public Safety Emergencies
Vehicle Collisions

9-8-8

Suicide Prevention
Mental Health Crisis Support
Substance Use Support

2-1-1

Non-Emergency Assistance
Resource Support Line
(Housing, Food, Etc.)
Transportation and Older Adults / Disability Services



WILL COUNTY
EXECUTIVE
JENNIFER BERTINO-TARRANT

Throughout May we have joined the nationwide recognition for Mental Health Awareness Month. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year and 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience a serious mental illness. The COVID-19 Pandemic exacerbated this issue and reiterated the importance of availability of mental health services.

Expanding access to mental health and behavioral healthcare has been a top priority for Will County leadership. Following the countywide referendum on developing a Community Mental Health Board, I have worked closely with the Will County Board to ensure that this new entity receives the resources needed to accomplish their important mission. This new board will be a key step in empowering our community mental health services throughout the county. This action also coincides with the Will County Health Department finalizing their newly expanded Behavioral Health Suite at the Community Health Center. This new facility will allow them to offer modern services residents in need.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you of two key services that can connect residents with services. Will County 211 is a free, multi-lingual, confidential 24-hour information and referral service that provides a central access point to health and human services. This program is funded by Will County and operated by the United Way of Will County. The State of Illinois has also recently launched the 988 Hotline to help residents experiencing a crisis or emotional distress, such as a mental health crisis, substance use issues, or thoughts of suicide. As both of these are relatively new services, I hope that you'll help spread the word!

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant
Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant | Will County Executive

ELEVATE WILL COUNTY

Will County has announced the awarded allocation of \$43 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to 120 local governments, community organizations, and small businesses throughout the county. This announcement follows Will County Board approval of allocations at its May 18, 2023 Board Meeting.

This funding is a significant investment into programs supporting health, economic development, and infrastructure in all Will County communities. Funding was made available to the community through an open application process and was thoroughly reviewed to ensure alignment with federal requirements.

These allocations include:

- \$10 million in economic development funding, including \$7.2 million to programs that support local households and healthy children.
- \$16 million in infrastructure funding to support local water and sewer infrastructure improvements, including expanded access to drinking water, lead remediation efforts, and stormwater management efforts.
- \$17.2 million in funding to increase health services and expand access to healthcare, including \$6.4 million to programs expanding access and equity to health programs, \$5.4 million to behavioral health programs, \$4.5 million to programs supporting food stabilization, and over \$800,000 for crime prevention.

An online dashboard has been launched to allow the public to view the full listing of allocations and to learn how to access services expanded by ARPA funding.



Start Seeing Motorcycles

County Executive Bertino-Tarrant presented a proclamation recognizing Motorcycle Awareness Month to the Will County Chapter of ABATE of Illinois. ABATE of Illinois has dedicated their 36 years of service to leadership in the area of motorcycle safety, education, and awareness.

As a reminder – all motor vehicles have the same rights and privileges. Please share the road and stay alert for motorcycles in these warmer months, as they are smaller and more difficult to see than cars and larger vehicles on the roadways. Start Seeing Motorcycles!



FREE Food Giveaway in Downtown Joliet

Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant and ShareFest Will County are partnering to host a free food giveaway event at the Will County Office Building (302 N. Chicago St., Joliet) on Saturday, May 27, 2023. Attendees will have the opportunity to drive up and receive free food and groceries – all community members are welcome, and registration is not required.

Distribution will begin at 9 a.m. and last until 12 p.m., or when supplies run out, whichever comes first. Groceries will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, and attendees are asked to enter the line and parking lot at the Will County Office Building from Scott St.

County Executive Bertino-Tarrant is partnering with several organizations throughout Will County to host events to provide support to residents as the prices of goods and services rise. For questions about this event or with ideas for future opportunities, please contact the Will County Executive Office at countyexec@willcountyillinois.com or (815) 740-4601.



Ready Will County New EMA App

Will County's Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has launched a new-and-improved version of the Ready Will County smartphone app. The app is an innovative tool to help residents receive timely alerts and to be able to effectively plan ahead for a wide range of scenarios.

Substantial improvements were made to the app to improve navigation and provide new informational content. The app also now allows residents to register their loved ones to help first responders identify those in need of assistance in the event of a disaster.

Features include: Emergency Alerts, Emergency Plan Preparation Tools, Preparedness Materials, Warming and Cooling Center Locations, Report Damage to Will County EMA, and Volunteer Opportunities and Information.

The Ready Will County app is available through both the Apple iTunes and Google Play stores and works with Apple and Android devices.



Collection Event a Success

Will County held its annual Textiles and Small Home Goods Collection event May 8-12 at the Will County Office Building in Downtown Joliet. Partnering with Helping Hands, nearly 19,000 pounds of materials were collected during the week, of which over 16,000 pounds were clothing and shoes (textiles). This year's total was over 2,000 pounds more than the total weight of materials collected last year!

Will County has partnered with Helping Hands for this collection event for the past few years. They generously provide staff and a truck for the full week of collection, and place collection boxes throughout Will County to collect textiles year-round. Past organizations Will County has partnered with for this type of recycling and collection services include Goodwill, Savers, St. Vincent DePaul, and USAgain.

All of the organizations offer reuse and recycling services throughout the year. Please be sure to donate your unwanted textiles any time of the year through any of these organizations or hold on to them and be part of next May's Will County Textiles and Small Home Goods Collection event!