

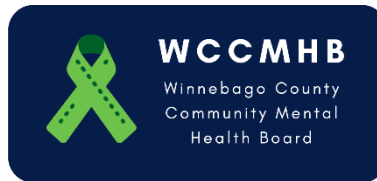
News Release

For Immediate Release

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Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board Approves Updated Three-Year Strategic Plan

ROCKFORD, IL — The Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board (WCCMHB) is proud to announce the approval of its updated three-year strategic plan 3.0, which will be the guiding document for Program Years 7-9. This comprehensive plan, developed by Region 1 Planning Council through local data collection and analysis, identifies critical service gaps and sets actionable steps to enhance mental health services throughout Winnebago County.

“The updated strategic plan signals our continued commitment to supporting the mental health and well-being of our community,” said Mary Ann Abate, Board President of WCCMHB. “By leveraging community input and data-driven insights, we are better equipped to address unmet needs and strengthen the overall system of care.”

Board Vice President Richard Kunnert emphasized the impact of the half-cent sales tax stating, “We continue to create services for residents that would not be possible without the half-cent sales tax. This newest Strategic Plan guides priorities and direction for the next three years and the upcoming funding decisions in the next grant applications.”

Key initiatives outlined in the plan include expanding access to care, improving crisis response services, increasing support for youth, the elderly, and other specialized populations, and fostering greater collaboration among local mental health providers.

The WCCMHB expresses gratitude to community partners, agencies, and residents who contributed their perspectives during the strategic planning process. There will be an announcement in autumn 2026 of the “Notice of Funding Opportunity” for grant applications in the next funding cycle. Implementation of the new strategic plan will begin at the start of Program Year 7, which is on June 1, 2027.

For more information about the WCCMHB and its approved strategic plan, please visit r1planning.org/community-impact/wccmhb/.

ABOUT WCCMHB – The [Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board](http://r1planning.org/community-impact/wccmhb/) (WCCMHB) is a board of appointed community leaders and public officials dedicated to investing and supporting mental health and substance use services for adults and children in Winnebago County. WCCMHB receives funding

through a half-cent sales tax which was approved by Winnebago County residents in March 2020 and November 2024. This sales tax generates approximately \$20 million annually for mental health and substance use services across the county. WCCMHB positively impacts the Winnebago County community by increasing access to local services by providing support and funding to organizations, non-profits, and government agencies that offer mental health and substance use services. This allows Winnebago County residents to live and recover in the community.

ABOUT RPC – [Region 1 Planning Council](#) is a special-purpose, regional government agency providing cross-jurisdictional, government-to-government collaborative planning for Northern Illinois. The regional planning model provides an efficient means to promoting a well-informed, comprehensive dialogue that holistically addresses regional issues by fulfilling the needs of government entities for long-range planning, securing funding, and analyzing and providing data in support of regional projects and initiatives. *The Region 1 Planning Council provides staff support to the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board.*

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