



## Office of the County Administrator

*Joshua Schoemann, County Administrator*

*Matt Furno, Deputy County Administrator*

*Ethan Hollenberger, Public Affairs Coordinator*

Herbert J. Tennes  
Government Center  
432 E. Washington Street  
P.O. Box 1986  
West Bend, WI 53095-7986  
(262) 306-2200

For Immediate Release:

September 16, 2019

Contact: Coral Kline, 262-335-4564

### Washington County releases [video depicting need for foster families in our community](#)

*West Bend, WI* – In an effort to raise awareness about the need for foster parents in Washington County, the Human Services Department is taking a new approach. The Foster Care Program recruits, licenses and trains foster parents to provide loving and stable homes for children and youth when it is not safe for them to remain in their natural home.

The video highlights the staggering fact that since 2017, the need for foster parents in Washington County has increased by 35%. During that time, 167 children have been removed from their home because of abuse or neglect by a primary caretaker, including 36 children in 2019. Most often, the children in need of foster homes are teenagers, sibling groups, or children with special needs, such as mental health, behavioral, or emotional difficulties.

*“Currently, there are no foster homes in our community who are licensed to take placement of teenagers and siblings are often split up and placed into separate homes,”* said Coral Kline, Children and Families Manager. *“This results in kids being placed outside our community where they cannot remain in their schools or near their families.”*

The needs in Washington County are aligned with state and national trends that kids are staying in out of home care longer because parents need time to get treatment services and stabilize their ability to access basic needs such as housing or employment. In 2017, The WI Department of Children and Families identified substance use treatment as a significant parental need in 21% of all CPS cases statewide.

In addition, children and youth have a higher level of need than we have previously seen or understood. Exposure to trauma (parent’s substance use, domestic violence, neglect, etc.) has contributed to mental health and developmental delays that often appear to be behavioral concerns. This creates additional challenges for parents and caregivers who are trying to create safe environments for kids to grow and develop.

*“Our greatest need is foster parents who are willing to open their homes for boys of any age, girls ages 7 to 15 and for families who are able to keep sibling groups together.”*

For information on becoming a foster parent or to support the foster parent community, contact the Washington County Human Services Department at (262) 365-5100 or at [FosterCare@co.washington.wi.us](mailto:FosterCare@co.washington.wi.us)

###