

Lutheran Services of Iowa

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Lutheran Services of Iowa ( LSI ) provides a broad range of services to the families of Story County, some of which are funded in part by the ASSET funding process. Similar services provided by LSI in Boone are not included in the ASSET funding process.

LSI's Early Childhood and Parenting programs are coordinated by Alyssa Barton (note last name has changed). As a full time Program Coordinator Alyssa has worked hard this past year performing outreach, increasing the number of families served and adding a new program which in its pilot year.

Referrals to the LSI programs continue to increase but meeting the needs of these families has been a struggle due to lack of qualified providers especially in child care and emergency child care services. It is noted during this site visit that lack of child care affects all families in Story County not just limited income or families in crisis.

LSI programs which receive ASSET funding include:

Crisis Child Care. This program serves families with children 0- 12 years of age. The service is provided outside of the child's home and is utilized by parents who are in crisis including sickness, mental health needs or other issues which prevent parents from providing a safe environment for a child or children. The program serves families who have no other resources, support or options in the community. The program works with families to find long term solutions for future needs/ crisis's. Services are provided by licensed child care providers. These providers may also have other day care children in their homes and may be limited in the number of children they serve. Unfortunately the number of providers is decreased and the number of slots available is even more limited due to reimbursement rates from the state as well as the demand for regular child care which is a guaranteed consistent source of payment for providers. Ten families in need of service from July to September 2018 were turned away. LSI has not kept stats on previous years to establish a pattern of deficits.

Parents as Teachers. This program serves families with children 0- 5 years of age. It utilizes paid staff who are trained to provide home visits to identified families at risk, have a child with special needs or are dealing with issues related to poverty. The focus of these visits is to provide good parenting skills to promote health and planning for the family's future as well as preventing abuse and neglect. Referrals for this service have increased with the implementation of a more deliberate effort of outreach to schools and public safety.

Parent Development. The Nurturing Parents Program is an eight week program offered twice a year to families that may have been referred by DHS or parents who volunteer to enroll in the program. The

curriculum involves training in child development, parenting strategies, health and nutrition, positive discipline, special needs, early literacy, communication, sibling rivalry, stress, grief, and other behaviors. Families referred by DHS are required to complete all eight weeks. They also must provide their own transportation in an effort to promote self-sufficiency. The People Place also provides a more informal opportunity for informational gatherings 2 to 3 times a week which provides speakers, meals and an atmosphere of socialization and fellowship with parents in similar situations. This program is especially attractive to an ethnically diverse population due to its proximity to ISU and families connected to ISU who are from overseas. Both programs are provided by trained paid staff and students from ISU.

Supported Community Living (SCL). SCL provides services to adults with disabilities in Story County communities. The ASSET funding provides support for those clients who otherwise do not qualify for government paid waiver services or are part of a waiting list for waiver services. The waiting list at this time to be approved for waiver is anywhere from 2 to 3 years. The program provides case management to adults with disabilities who strive to become self-sufficient. Services range from developing communication skills, learning homemaking skills, personal care, check book balancing and acquiring and keeping employment. The intensity of the services are as variable as the clients they serve. These supports can be provided in the community at a much lower cost than institutionalization outside of the person's home/ community.

School Based Mental Health. LSI is no longer seeking ASSET funds for this program.

LSI has a local Advisory Council and a statewide board which provides structure and direction to all LSI's programs. LSI's financial condition appears to be stable as it is a well-established organization which reaches statewide and nationally.. Medicaid privatization continues to create unknowns and limited reimbursement. Most notable is LSI's ability to do a lot with little and more limited funding.

LSI's strength is in the quality programs provided and in LSI's commitment to providing the needed services in the community without duplication of services. LSI believes in collaborating with agencies to accomplish this. The services provided in the family life programs are provided as a result of community resources, private donors, grants and ASSET funding.

LSI has piloted a new program which has shown the promise of another service for families which was funded by United Way this year. This program is referred to as Parent Café. This resource offers a small group setting which includes a meal and paid staff as hosts of each group who provide structure for discussion of parenting topics. Although ASSET is not providing funds for this program, there is a potential funds will be requested in the future. The initial pilot program served 25 participants and feedback was positive.