



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Tony Evers, Governor  
Kathy Blumenfeld, Secretary-Designee

December 29, 2022

To: Governor Tony Evers  
Mike Queensland, Chief Clerk, Wisconsin State Senate  
Ted Blazel, Chief Clerk, Wisconsin State Assembly

From: Michael Basford, Director, State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

VIA EMAIL

Pursuant to §16.03(2)(c), Wisconsin Statutes, please find attached the annual report for the State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness.

In addition to fulfilling my statutory obligation by delivering this report, I will also be sending copies to Council members and other interested parties via email and will presently be posting a pdf of this report on the Council's website.

Please let me know if you have any questions or require any more information.

Thank you, and Happy New Year!

Michael Basford  
Director  
State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

cc (VIA EMAIL):

Council Members: Secretary-Designee Kathy Blumenfeld (Administration), Secretary Emilie Amundson (Children and Families), Secretary Kevin Carr (Corrections), Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake (Health Services), Secretary Mary Kolar (Veterans Affairs), Deputy Secretary Pam McGillivray (Workforce Development), Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly (Public Instruction), Executive Director Elmer Moore (WI Housing and Economic Development Authority), Rafael J. Acevedo, Jr., Teresa Reinders, Torrie Kopp Mueller, Carrie Poser

# State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

## 2022 Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature

Prepared by Michael Basford, Director  
Submitted December 14, 2022

As Wisconsin and the rest of the nation continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges to provide housing and services for our state's most vulnerable continue. The annual point-in-time (PIT) count in January 2022 recorded 4,474 people in emergency shelters, transitional housing, Safe Havens, or unsheltered. Of those persons, 651 people experiencing chronic homelessness (defined as a single individual, or head of household, with a disabling condition who has either experienced homelessness for longer than a year, during which time the individual may have lived in a shelter, Safe Haven, or a place not meant for human habitation or experienced homelessness four or more times in the last three years) were counted - a number higher than numbers counted prior to the pandemic.

The Department of Public Instruction reported 13,431 students experiencing homelessness (defined as children and youths as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence) served by the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program in Wisconsin schools for the 2020-2021 school year. This continues a trend of numbers going down in reporting during the pandemic while school districts were not operating at 100% in-person schooling.

Responding to our challenges has been the main work of the Interagency Council on Homelessness. And we've responded with new programming and investments from the Evers Administration.

### **Interagency Council Meetings**

The Interagency Council held four meetings in 2022. Representing agencies and member organizations for Council meetings in 2022 were:

Governor Tony Evers, Chair

Secretary-Designee Kathy Blumenfeld (Administration)

Secretary Emilie Amundson, Senior Policy Advisor Jane Penner-Hoppe (Children and Families)

Secretary Kevin Carr (Corrections)

Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake, Homelessness Services Manager Amy Pulda, Deputy

Administrator Alfred Johnson (Health Services)

State Coordinator for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Kristine Nadolski (Public Instruction)

Executive Director Elmer Moore (Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority)

Deputy Secretary Pam McGillivray., Legislative Liaison Jennifer Cole (Workforce Development)

Secretary Mary Kolar, Director of Bureau of Health Services Jennifer Fahey (Veterans Affairs)

Carrie Poser (Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care)

Torrie Kopp Mueller (Dane County Continuum of Care)

Rafael J. Acevedo, Jr. (Milwaukee County Continuum of Care)

Teresa Reinders (Racine County Continuum of Care)

The activities for the Council for the meetings were:

- **March 23<sup>rd</sup>**: Agency and Continuum of Care check-in on COVID-19 response where programs intersected with homeless population, presentation from Heidi Wegleitner and Susan Lund from Legal Action WI and Brenda Konkel from MachONE Health Madison on criminalization of homelessness in Wisconsin, approval of a decision item to authorize Director to initiate a data-collection project on criminalization of homelessness, presentation from Carrie Poser and Torrie Kopp Mueller on the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Projects (YHDP) the Balance of State and Dane County Continuum of Care are initiating with federal funding, approval of a decision to authorize the Director to sign statements on behalf of the Council to endorsing each CoC's Coordinated Community Plans for their YHDP projects.
- **June 22<sup>nd</sup>**: Agency and Continuum of Care check-in on COVID-19 response where programs intersected with homeless population, information on the January 2022 Point-in-Time count, Director presentation on statewide plan progress.
- **November 30<sup>th</sup>**: Agency and Continuum of Care check-in on COVID-19 response where programs intersected with homeless population, approval of a decision item to update the timelines on the statewide plan metrics page, approving meeting calendar for 2023
- **December 14<sup>th</sup>**: Agency and Continuum of Care check-in on COVID-19 response where programs intersected with homeless population, approval of annual report, and presentation on the Safe Shelter and Homelessness Grants program by DEHCR.

Eight workgroup sessions were held in 2022 on January 25<sup>th</sup>, March 1<sup>st</sup>, April 26<sup>th</sup>, May 24<sup>th</sup>, July 19<sup>th</sup>, August 30<sup>th</sup>, October 25<sup>th</sup>, and December 6<sup>th</sup>. Sessions focused on the following:

- Progress on action items from Welcoming Wisconsin Home
- Progress on Medicaid and CHIP housing initiatives with the Department of Health Services
- Data gathering and sharing with Institute for Community Alliances and UW-Madison Institute for Research on Poverty
- A presentation on Housing First with the Wisconsin Housing First Coalition
- A survey of statewide housing authorities about homelessness preferences in applications
- Domestic violence homelessness programming presentation with Department of Children and Families and End Domestic Abuse WI
- A panel on unsheltered homelessness with Brian Sampson (City of La Crosse), Brenda Konkel (Madison Street Medicine), Pastor Mike Henry and Karen Petersin (Chippewa Valley Street Ministry), Eric Collins-Dyke and Beth Lappen (Milwaukee County Housing Division), and Tracy Rieger (City of Wausau Police Department)

## **Response to COVID-19**

Unsheltered homelessness due to the lack of affordable housing, lack of shelter opportunities, and a myriad of economic and social conditions continued to be a growing concern in Wisconsin in 2022. Agencies serving people experiencing homelessness continue to do heroic work to keep as many people safe as they are able and working to move more people into housing – though many barriers to sustainable housing situations still exist. Point-in-time counts done during 2022 showed an increase in the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness rising.

State government continues acting to help people experiencing homelessness and to keep people in housing and out of the homelessness system. These efforts include:

- DEHCR continues to administer the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance (WERA) program – a partnership with Wisconsin Community Action Program Association agencies throughout the state to use funding provided by the US Department of Treasury from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 for emergency rental assistance in "non-entitlement areas" (defined in this instance as the entire

state - excepting Brown, Dane, Milwaukee, and Waukesha counties as they received their own funding). As of December 2<sup>nd</sup>, over \$224 million had been distributed to assist over 55,000 Wisconsin households with rental assistance and assistance for other housing costs. This investment kept those households in housing and out of eviction court.

- On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Governor Evers announced project awards for the Neighborhood Investment Fund program funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to provide funding to local and Tribal governments for making significant investments with long-term benefits to help neighborhoods recover from negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Housing projects awarded for Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Dodge, Grant, Milwaukee, Vernon, Racine, Brown, and Marathon counties and the Ho-Chunk Nation will add 817 housing units and shelter projects in Oshkosh, Milwaukee, Menomonie, and Eau Claire will add 100 shelter beds.
- In March, Governor Evers announced an \$8 million investment of ARPA funds through Department of Children and Families and Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation (WisTAF) to support Wisconsinites who need legal assistance to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In response to concerns of growing unsheltered homelessness throughout the state as we entered winter, Governor Evers announced on September 28<sup>th</sup> an additional \$1.7 million for the Safe Shelter and Homelessness Grant program and for homelessness case management.
- In December, Governor Evers announced the launch of the Veterans Rental Assistance Program. VRAP is funded with \$2 million of ARPA funds to provide rental and other housing assistance to assist veterans experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

## Other Agency Highlights

Work of other agencies in 2022 that intersected with service to people experiencing homelessness included:

- 2022 Inaugural Wisconsin Supportive Housing Institute, a partnership between WHEDA and the Corporation for Supportive Housing to increase supportive housing development in communities across Wisconsin by training teams on ways to reduce the time it takes to obtain funding for supportive housing by improving the planning and development process, completed their work with seven development teams to plan supportive housing projects. The work on these projects will be continued to connect with funding opportunities so these projects can become reality.
- The Department of Health Services accomplished the following to assist people experiencing homelessness:
  - o Received approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to provide housing support for low-income Wisconsin families in need through a Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Health Services Initiative (HSI). Included in this HSI will be housing consultations, transition supports, relocation supports and sustaining supports for people experiencing all categories of homelessness. Eight agencies throughout Wisconsin will be contracted to provide these housing supports statewide beginning in 2023.
  - o Successfully applied with CMS to provide housing services through Medicaid for people experiencing homelessness who have an identified healthcare need. The services to be offered are the same as the CHIP HSI. It is expected to be approved in the beginning of 2023.
  - o Working with DOA to pay for recovery residency vouchers for people experiencing or at risk for homelessness recovering from opioid addiction disorders. This housing voucher program will be funded with opioid settlement funds to start in 2023.
  - o Stood up a program to provide rapid antigen COVID tests for emergency shelters for free.
  - o Stood up a new COVID telehealth program to provide COVID healthcare screenings with healthcare clinicians to provide medications to people with COVID.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs, through the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program, provided transitional housing for 169 veterans experiencing homelessness so far in 2022. Of the 87 veterans who exited the program, 54 exited to permanent housing. The federal VA funding for facilities will be going towards renovations at the Union Grove facility and finding a new location for the Chippewa Falls facility.

- The Department of Workforce Development's Office of Veteran Employment Services, through their partnership with the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program, has provided individualized career services to 183 veterans experiencing homelessness since November 2021 with at least 59 of those veterans securing sustainable employment.
- The Department of Children and Families reports that for the Runaway and Homeless Youth program that over 1,000 young people have been served so far in 2022.

## **Welcoming Wisconsin Home**

"Welcoming Wisconsin Home: A Statewide Action Plan for Homelessness 2021-2023" was officially launched in February. Since then, we have been working on action items that are outside the budget and legislative processes. This includes:

- Developing a racial equity analysis framework that we look forward to using to evaluate state programs in 2023
- Assisting Department of Health Services' efforts to pursue Medicaid authorities, initiatives, and activities related to housing support services
- Working with WI Planning and Response to End Homelessness Group on a "Response to the COVID pandemic" debrief document
- Encouraging housing authorities to provide homeless preferences for housing choice vouchers
- Working with landlords and landlord associations to encourage renting to people experiencing homelessness
- Creating a regional homelessness consortium with our neighboring states.

## **Evictions in Wisconsin**

The Wisconsin Eviction Data Project, launched in May 2021, continues to be a valuable resource for understanding the trends in eviction filings and judgements in every county of the state. We also continue to supply our CAP agency partners with weekly information on who has been filed on for eviction so that they can reach out and provide assistance through the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance (WERA) program – helping tens of thousands of Wisconsin households keep their housing, stay out of eviction courts and keep out of entering the homelessness system.

In 2022, we started seeing the number of filings for eviction increase to near pre-pandemic levels. For January through November in 2019, there were 24,878 filings for eviction. For the same period in 2022, there were 23,893 filings – just lower than the pre-pandemic numbers. However, the numbers for eviction judgements in 2022 are on pace to be the lowest since we started tracking the number of eviction filings and judgements in 2019. For January through November in 2019, there were 3,956 judgements for eviction in Wisconsin. For the same period in 2022, there were 1,472 – just 37% the number for the same time in 2019.

WERA played a large role in keeping judgement numbers lower. There were, however, other interventions throughout the state that assisted tenants with problems making rent as we continue to recover. One program is Eviction Free MKE by the Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee. The program provides legal assistance in court and assistance in securing emergency rental assistance. We will be studying this program and the results of the legal services investment at WisTAF further in 2023 to determine what would be needed for a "Right to Civil Counsel" program statewide.

## Director's Activities

From Michael Basford, Interagency Council on Homelessness Director:

“In the 2019 Interagency Council Annual Report, I highlighted three duties for this position I developed in addition to the statutory requirements. Those duties were:

- ***Establish a relationship with communities and organizations around Wisconsin to understand how homelessness affects every area of Wisconsin, to learn the details of community responses to homelessness, and to provide whatever assistance I can to help these communities fight homelessness;***
- ***Identify areas of policy for focusing state resources; and***
- ***Serve as a conduit between levels of government.***

I continued performing these duties throughout the year, mostly virtually, in service to agencies and communities throughout the state.

In 2022, I participated in the following meetings and events:

- January 5 – Met with Brenda Konkel, MACHOne Health
- January 6 – Attended a Wausau community meeting on homelessness
- January 11 – Met with Casey Becker, Dane County Human Services
- January 13 – Met with Tammie King-Johnson, Family Promise of Rock County
- January 20 – Met with Julie McDermid, Karuna Housing (La Crosse)
- February 3 – I testified in front of the State Senate’s Housing, Commerce and Trade Committee on SB 830
- February 11 – I spoke at the quarterly Balance of State CoC Board Meeting
- February 11 – Met with Rep. Jill Billings to discuss homelessness issues in La Crosse
- February 17 – Participated on a panel as part of the City of Milwaukee’s Equal Rights Commission’s “Lunch N Learn” series
- February 24 – Gave a presentation on “Welcoming Wisconsin Home” to the Beloit Area Task Force on Homelessness
- March 2 – On Earl Ingram radio show to discuss “Welcoming Wisconsin Home”
- March 3 – On Tony Castañeda radio show to discuss “Welcoming Wisconsin Home”
- March 3 – Attended City of Madison presentation on CARES Team
- March 8 – Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway call about proposed new single men’s shelter
- March 10 – Met with Colin McGuinn, Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee
- March 15 – Met with Joe Mauthe, Pillars Inc.
- March 16 – I addressed the Wisconsin Apartment Association’s annual Lobby Day at the Capitol
- March 16 – Nancy Esteves, Institute for Community Alliances
- March 17 – Met with Michelle Friedrich, South West CAP
- March 22 – Met with Robin Sereno and Hannah Renfro with the Tenant Resource Center of Madison to discuss programming.
- March 30 – I met with Julie Lo (Executive Director), Courtney Tacker (Director of Local Initiatives) and Cody Zeger (Director of Statewide Policy) of the California Interagency Council on Homelessness at their offices in Sacramento, CA. We discussed statewide plans on homelessness and shared challenges.
- April 12 – Brian Sampson, City of La Crosse
- April 18 – Beverley Ebersold, US Interagency Council on Homelessness
- April 20 – I appeared on WCLO’s (Janesville) “Your Talk Show” to discuss Welcoming Wisconsin Home and the upcoming Rock County Diversity Action Team’s presentation on housing and homelessness.
- April 21 – I participated in the Rock County DAT’s “Housing Assistance Through COVID Relief” presentation and discussion.
- April 27 – Wisconsin Housing First Coalition roundtable

April 29 – I met with Marney Thomas and Sean Whitten of re-institute about proposed 100-day challenges for Wisconsin communities.

May 5 – I visited Waukesha with DOA Secretary-designee Blumenfeld and toured Hebron House's Siena House and Juno House and the overflow shelter for the Housing Action Coalition of Waukesha County with Hebron House's Executive Director Kathleen Fisher and HAC's Executive Director Jackie Smith.

May 9 – I visited Milwaukee and met with Ian Bautista from the council's Racial Equity Working Group and toured the Ambassador Inn (hotel used for non-congregate sheltering during the pandemic) with Rafael Acevedo (City of Milwaukee) and Ryan Hurse (Milwaukee County).

May 10th and 11th – I attended the A Home for Everyone conference in Milwaukee and gave a presentation on Welcoming Wisconsin Home.

May 11th – I visited Lakeshore CAP in Manitowoc and discussed their housing and homelessness programs with Colleen Homb (Executive Director) and Kate Markwardt (Supportive Housing Program Director). I also attended a meeting of the Brown County Apartment Association in Green Bay at the invitation of Cinnamon Harley to discuss issues around landlords renting to people who have Housing Choice Vouchers.

May 12th – In Green Bay, I visited House of Hope emergency shelter and met with Beth Hudak and Summer Wyant and also visited Safe Shelter emergency shelter and met with Pearl Webster. In Oshkosh, I visited Day-by-Day shelter and met with Molly Yatso-Butz (Executive Director) to discuss the new facility development project – which was recently funded in part by the Neighborhood Investment Fund program.

May 13th – I gave a presentation on Welcoming Wisconsin Home to the Balance of State Board meeting

May 16th – I visited Outreach LGBTQ center in Madison and met with Steve Starkey (Executive Director) and AJ Hardie (Program Director) to discuss Willma's Fund and needs of LGBTQ persons experiencing homelessness in Madison.

May 19th – I attended a meeting of the Apartment Association of South-East Wisconsin to discuss Eviction Data Project.

May 24th – I attended the groundbreaking for the shelter addition at Sojourner House in Eau Claire with Secretary-designee Blumenfeld. This shelter addition is being funded in part by the Neighborhood Investment Fund program.

May 27th – I met with Bre Loughlin of Nurse's Disrupted to discuss her agency's work during the pandemic to provide telehealth services for emergency shelters in Madison.

June 9th – I visited Kenosha County and met with Sharon Pomaville of The Sharing Center in Trevor, visited the Shalom Center in Kenosha and met with Tamarra Coleman (Executive Director) and visited Kenosha Human Development Services and met with Jeannine Field (Executive Director) and Lisa Haen (Associate Director). At Shalom Center and KHDS I was joined by Reps. Tod Ohnstad and Tip McGuire.

June 16 – I met with the Apartment Association of Southeast Wisconsin's Legislative Committee to discuss the Wisconsin Eviction Data Project and the methodology behind it in comparison to a research project AASEW was conducting.

June 27 – Tomah. I visited the Ho-Chunk Nation's Housing and Community Development Authority and met with Neil Whitegull, Executive Director. We discussed housing needs for the Nation.

June 28 – Chippewa Falls. I visited Klein Hall, Veterans Housing and Recovery Program facility and met with Director Mike Hanke of Lutheran Social Services and Veteran Outreach Specialist Karla Peterson of Wisconsin DVA.

June 28 – Barron. I visited a transitional housing facility under development by Salvation Army of Barron County and met with Duana Bremer, Director of the Salvation Army of St. Croix, Polk and Burnett County.

June 28th – I participated in a virtual meeting with the US Interagency Council on Homelessness and my state counterparts. We discussed federal funding opportunities.

June 29th – Ashland. I visited the newly opened emergency shelter with DOA Secretary Blumenfeld. We met with Mille Rounsville of Northwest CSA and former Mayor Deb Lewis, along with other shelter staff and local advocates.

June 30th – I met with Mike Lee of the United Way of Marathon County to discuss homelessness in Wausau and Marathon County.

June 30th – Stevens Point. I visited the Salvation Army Hope Center shelter and met with Leigh Ann Trzinski, Shelter Director.

July 14th – La Crosse. I met with Julie McDermid of Karuna Housing and Sandra Brekke of Gundersen Health to discuss homelessness in La Crosse. I also toured the Houska Park encampment with Brian Sampson, City of La Crosse. Brian and I then met with Mayor Mitch Reynolds and Dale Darrow from Milwaukee HUD office.

July 15th – La Crosse. Participated in the Winter Sheltering Retreat organized by the city.

July 21st – Milwaukee. Met with Jim Mathy of Milwaukee County Housing, attended a monthly Downtown BID Crisis Intervention Team meeting, and visited Pathfinders and met with Tim Baack, CEO.

July 24th – July 27th – Washington, DC. Attended the National Alliance to End Homelessness' Annual Conference.

August 1 – Met with Rabbi Bonnie Margulis of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice, Reverend Kerri Parker and Reverend Breanna Illene of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, Angela Jones of United Way of Dane County, and Olivia Parry of Dane County Planning and Development to present on Welcoming Wisconsin Home and discuss housing/homelessness issues in Dane County.

August 10th – Visited Rethke Terrace in Madison and met with Dean Loumos of Tellurian and Brother Henryk Cisowski of Capuchin Community Services of Milwaukee to discuss supportive housing.

August 19th – Met with Jason Weller and staff of Michigan Interagency Council on Homelessness to discuss establishing a regional consortium.

August 23rd – Gave a presentation on homelessness in Wisconsin at the Sequoya Library in Madison.

August 24th – Presented on veteran homelessness and Welcoming Wisconsin Home to the Governor's Blue-Ribbon Commission on Veteran Opportunity.

August 31st – Met with the Board of Directors for Housing Initiatives in Madison to discuss state progress and permanent housing opportunities.

September 13th – Met with the Housing Delegation for the United Way of Dane County.

September 14th – Met with Deanna Kloster of United HealthCare of Milwaukee about housing navigation and permanent supportive housing.

September 16th – Delavan. Gave a presentation on Welcoming Wisconsin Home and our recent housing authority survey with the Wisconsin Association of Housing Authorities.

September 21st – Meeting with the Green Bay Homelessness Outreach Team

September 27th – Fond du Lac. Met with the housing staff for ADVOCAP

September 27th – Appleton. Met with the community development staff for the City of Appleton to discuss increasing the amount of affordable housing in Appleton and homelessness services.

September 28th – Green Bay. Spent the day with the Homelessness Outreach Team and visited with staff at NEWCAP.

October 1 – Racine. I attended the Racine area Veterans Standdown.

October 4 – Beloit. I visited Family Promise of Rock County's shelter and met with Tammie King-Johnson and attended WISCAP's public hearing on homelessness.

October 8 – Madison. I attended the Madison area Veterans Standdown.

October 20 – Milwaukee. Visited VA Community Resource and Referral Center and met with agency staff, attended Milwaukee Downtown BID Community Intervention Team meeting, visited Legal Aid of Wisconsin offices with Executive Director Colleen Foley, and visited the Repairers of the Breach facility and met with staff. All meetings were with Dale Darrow of the Milwaukee HUD office.

October 27 – I participated in a media panel with Department of Health Services announcing housing supports programming.

November 2 – I spoke at the State Capitol for the kickoff event for Homelessness Awareness Month.

November 16 – I met with the Building and Construction Trades Council to discuss potential partnerships for tiny homes community development.

November 18 - I gave a presentation to the Balance of State Continuum of Care quarterly board meeting.

November 18 – Milwaukee. I gave a speech at the Courage MKE annual gala fundraising event.



We continue working with the Emergency Support Function #6 Team for the monthly Homelessness Forum presentations that provide vital information to providers of services for people experiencing homelessness. These regular meetings bring in dozens of people from around the state.

In 2023, I plan to continue to work with national agencies like the National Alliance to End Homelessness, National Low-Income Housing Coalition, Corporation for Supportive Housing, Urban Institute, and others to explore options to help facilitate development for low-income affordable housing – the availability of which is our largest challenge to efforts to move people from homelessness into housing.”

### **Looking forward**

The Interagency Council on Homelessness looks forward to the following in 2023:

- Continuing to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable in Wisconsin through investments in the 2023-25 Budget and legislative agenda;
- Continuing our progress on action items in Welcoming Wisconsin Home; and
- Continuing onsite visits with our partners throughout Wisconsin.