



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

Tony Evers, Governor  
Joel Brennan, Secretary

December 30, 2019

To: Governor Tony Evers  
Jeff Renk, Chief Clerk, Wisconsin State Senate  
Patrick Fuller, Chief Clerk, Wisconsin State Assembly

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

VIA HAND DELIVERY

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 deliver physical copies to leadership in both the Senate and Assembly. Additionally, I will be sending copies to all legislators, 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 HAND DELIVERY): Senator Roger Roth, President, Wisconsin State Senate  
Senator Scott Fitzgerald, Majority Leader, Wisconsin State Senate  
Senator Jennifer Shilling, Minority Leader, Wisconsin State Senate  
Speaker Robin Vos, Wisconsin State Assembly  
Rep. Jim Steineke, Majority Leader, Wisconsin State Assembly  
Rep. Gordon Hintz, Minority Leader, Wisconsin State Assembly

cc (VIA EMAIL): All members, Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly  
Council Members: Secretary Joel Brennan (Administration), Secretary Emilie Amundson (Children and Families), Secretary Kevin Carr (Corrections), Secretary Andrea Palm (Health Services), Secretary Mary Kolar (Veterans Affairs), Secretary Caleb Frostman (Workforce Development), Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor (Public Instruction), Executive Director Joaquín Altoro (WI Housing and Economic Development Authority), Rafael J. Acevedo, Jr., Gai Lorenzen, Torrie Kopp Mueller, Carrie Poser

# State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

## 2019 Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature

Prepared by Michael Basford, Director  
Submitted December 30, 2019

The change in administrations earlier this year brought with it a new Interagency Council on Homelessness and a new Director. The new Council has spent 2019 working very diligently through agency leadership, our partnerships with the different homeless continua of care serving Wisconsin's homeless, and the Director to follow Governor Evers' directive to connect the dots in regards to all areas where homelessness affects our communities.

Even though the challenges have not always been easy, there have been opportunities we have taken to make progress and to help the most vulnerable people in Wisconsin and we are quite confident we will be able to build on the foundation of our work this year and have success in 2020.

### Interagency Council Meetings

After the new administration entered office in January and agency leaders and the new Director were appointed, the new Council held three quarterly meetings in 2019. The Interagency Council on Homelessness members were:

- Governor Tony Evers, Chair
- Secretary Joel Brennan (Administration)
- Secretary Emilie Amundson (Children and Families)
- Secretary Kevin Carr (Corrections)
- Secretary Andrea Palm (Health Services)
- Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor (Public Instruction)
- Executive Director Joaquín Altoro (Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority)
- Secretary Caleb Frostman (Workforce Development)
- Secretary Mary Kolar (Veterans Affairs)
- Carrie Poser (Balance of State Continuum of Care)
- Torrie Kopp Mueller (Dane County Continuum of Care)
- Rafael J. Acevedo Jr. (Milwaukee County Continuum of Care)
- Gai Lorenzen (Racine County Continuum of Care)

The activities of the Council for the quarterly meetings were:

- **June 3:** Confirmed the appointment and hiring of Michael Basford as the new Director for the Council. Discussion was also had about a potential grant from WHEDA to the Council and Director Basford's activities since he started working in May.
- **September 9:** Discussed and approved the awards from the WHEDA dividends grant, approved Director Basford's quarterly report, and discussed the progress of proposed legislation that would commit additional funding for homelessness.
- **December 10:** Discussed and approved the updated spreadsheet further detailing Strategies and Objectives outlined in the "Hand and a Home" plan from 2018.

Additionally, the Council held an educational session on July 30th for administration council members and leadership staff to learn about the homeless continua of care and the work they are doing in Wisconsin. Also, three workgroup sessions were held on August 29th, October 4th and December 5th to review the "Hand and a

Home” plan developed by the previous administration and to provide further details for the Strategies and Objectives in the plan.

## **WHEDA Dividend Grants**

In July, the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority board gave the Council \$500,000 to distribute to agencies that work with the homeless for physical projects. An announcement and request for proposals went out on July 9th.

By the deadline of August 9th, 44 applications from all over the state totalling over \$3 million were submitted. A blind application review was done by a committee made up of Carrie Poser, Torrie Kopp Mueller and Rafael Acevedo. We were able to award grants to the 13 applications that scored the highest. The following projects were awarded:

- ADVOCAP was awarded \$100,000 to help purchase a building in Oshkosh for a permanent supportive housing project that will provide 13 units of housing. We have been told that they have an accepted offer on the building and they are looking forward to having the project on-line in early Spring 2020.
- Community Outreach Temporary Services was awarded \$70,000 for renovations and HVAC upgrades at their transitional housing facility in Appleton.
- Newcap was awarded \$70,000 to help purchase a duplex in Brown County to provide two permanent supportive housing units. They report to be in the process of searching for a property in the Green Bay - Howard market and hope to soon put a cash offer on a property to bring online.
- Racine Revitalization Partnership was awarded \$50,000 to help purchase 2 dwellings in Racine which will provide three permanent supportive housing units.
- YWCA of Madison was awarded \$50,000 for rehabilitation at their Downtown Madison location, which has 111 units.
- Housing Initiatives was awarded \$28,500 for security upgrades for 15 of permanent supportive housing units in Madison. The project was completed last month and their Executive Director reports that the additional security has improved their ability to manage the Housing First project on that site.
- Friends, Inc. was awarded \$28,000 for rehabilitation at their emergency shelter in West Bend.
- Shawano Area Matthew 25 was awarded \$25,000 for rehabilitation and accessibility upgrades for their emergency shelter in Shawano.
- Harbor House Crisis Shelters was awarded \$25,000 to help purchase five units of permanent supportive housing in Superior. The house for these units was recently purchased and is undergoing renovations. Harbor House reports that they hope to have the units online by Spring.
- Tellurian was awarded \$20,000 for rehabilitation at their SRO project in Madison.
- House of Hope Green Bay was awarded \$16,500 for security upgrades at their emergency shelter in Green Bay. They report that their upgrade project is in process and should be completed in January.
- Madison Area Urban Ministry was awarded \$13,000 for repairs at their medical shelter in Madison. They report the completion of an accessible ramp for the building and another project will be completed in the spring.
- Our Neighbors’ Place was awarded \$4,000 for repairs at their transitional housing facility in River Falls.

## Director's Activities

*From Michael Basford, Interagency Council on Homelessness Director:*

“After Governor Evers’ appointment, I began working for the Council on May 13th. As I’ve worked in this position over the last seven months, in addition to fulfilling the statutory requirements of this job (organizing and facilitating meetings and delivering this report) I have been able to develop a purpose and a set of duties for this position.

***The first duty is to 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.*** This requires visiting as many areas around the state as often as I can. The following is a detailed listing of where I have been visiting since May:

- June 6<sup>th</sup> – La Crosse: I visited the Catholic Charities warming center (meeting with Julie McDermid of the La Crosse Collaborative to End Homelessness and Sandy Brekke of Gundersen Health System) and Salvation Army of La Crosse (meeting with Major Jeff Richardson). I also took a meeting with Kim Cable of CouleeCAP and visited La Crosse City Hall to meet with Mayor Tim Kabat and Caroline Gregerson, La Crosse Community Development Administrator.
- June 10<sup>th</sup> – Denver, CO: I visited the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless to meet with Carrie Craig, Housing First Director. I made this appointment while I was in Colorado on vacation to learn about the Denver Social Impact Bond Initiative for permanent supportive housing.
- June 24<sup>th</sup> – Green Bay: I visited Green Bay City Hall to meet with Mayor Eric Genrich. I also visited Family Services and met with the Brown County Homeless and Housing Coalition.
- June 26<sup>th</sup> – Racine: I met with the Racine Continuum of Care at HALO, Inc., visited the Women’s Resource Center, visited The Veteran Village (a tiny homes community for veterans) and met with Jeff Gustin and Shannon Goodman of Veterans Outreach of Wisconsin. I also met with Vicky Selkove, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Community Partnerships for Mayor Cory Mason.
- June 27<sup>th</sup> – Milwaukee: I spoke at a Milwaukee Continuum of Care meeting, met housing staff from Milwaukee County and the cities of Milwaukee and West Allis, toured The Guest House and met with Executive Director Cindy Krahenbuhl I also visited the Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative and met with Executive Director Debbie Buchanan, Jacqueline Jordan of Wisconsin DVA and Quentin Hatfield, Executive Director of Wisconsin Veterans Network.
- July 10<sup>th</sup> – West Bend: I visited Family Promise of Washington County and spoke at a Washington County Continuum of Care meeting.
- July 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> – Eau Claire: I attended the Home for Everyone Conference at the invitation of The Collaborative for Affordable Housing and spoke on a panel on state housing resources and policy.
- July 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> – Washington, DC: I attended the National Alliance to End Homelessness’ Annual Conference at the invitation of the NAEH and spoke on a panel on communicating with Members of Congress.
- August 1<sup>st</sup> – Spoooner: I participated in a listening session for the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources’ comprehensive plan process and met with Duana Bremer, Director of the Grace

Place Salvation Army and Polk County Salvation Army and met with volunteers from St. Alban's shelter in Spooner.

- August 5<sup>th</sup> – Janesville, Delavan and Darien: I met with Kelly Bedessem, Housing Services Director for the City of Janesville. I met with Karen Lisser and Joe Locher of ECHO, Laura Laux and Becky Veium of Community Action in Delavan, and toured the Twin Oaks Shelter in Darien with James Stahl.
- August 19<sup>th</sup> – Milwaukee: I met with Beth Weirer, CEO of the Milwaukee BID, Edwin Huertas of the Governor's Milwaukee office, and Rafael Acevedo of the Milwaukee Continuum of Care to discuss a response to the Marquette Interchange homeless encampment. I also met with Saul Newton, Executive Director for the Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce.
- August 22<sup>nd</sup> – Waukesha: I met with the Housing Action Coalition of Waukesha County.
- August 30<sup>th</sup> – Kenosha: I visited and toured Shalom Center with Rep. Tod Ohnstad and met with Executive Director Tamarra Coleman and staff. I also met with Mayor John Antaramian, Kenosha Housing Authority Executive Director Donna Cook, Jeannine Field and Lisa Haen of Kenosha Human Development Services, and Rep. Ohnstad and Rep. Tip McGuire. And I also visited Grace Lutheran Church with Rep. Ohnstad and met with Pastor Jonathan Barker, Leif Peterson and Denise Russell, who manage a food pantry that the church operates and also organize Congregations United to Serve Humanity.
- September 9<sup>th</sup> – Waukesha, Loyal and Neillsville: I first visited the Waukesha Homeless Connect event organized by the United Way of Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties. I then travelled to Clark County. There, I visited the House of Mercy shelter in Loyal and met with Judy Morrow, director, and gave a speech on homelessness to the Kiwanis Club in Neillsville.
- September 11<sup>th</sup> – Wisconsin Rapids: I attended the Poverty Matters conference organized by WISCAP.
- September 12<sup>th</sup> – Trevor: I visited The Sharing Center with Senator Wirch and met with Director Sharon Pomaville and about a dozen people from the area to discuss homelessness funding bills and homelessness in rural Kenosha County.
- September 18<sup>th</sup> – Madison: I met with Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway and Deputy Mayor Dr. Linda Vakunta to discuss affordable housing projects and homelessness in Madison.
- September 19<sup>th</sup> – Madison, Milwaukee and Waukesha: I attended a leadership meeting at the Department of Transportation to discuss the Marquette Interchange encampment, then travelled to Milwaukee to discuss homelessness response with the Milwaukee Downtown BID Community Intervention Team and then Waukesha to meet with Mayor Shawn Reilly to discuss homelessness in Waukesha.
- October 11<sup>th</sup> – Milwaukee: I attended the kickoff of Milwaukee's Homeless Awareness Week at the United Way and met with Revelle Williams in the Governor's Milwaukee office to discuss Milwaukee homelessness and how to better connect the office with local homelessness organizations.
- October 15<sup>th</sup> – Milwaukee: I attended another Homeless Awareness Week event highlighting landlords and renting for homeless persons.
- October 17<sup>th</sup> – Middleton and Milwaukee: I attended the biannual Homeless Education Network (HEN) of Dane County meeting and travelled to Milwaukee to attend the Milwaukee Downtown BID Community Intervention Team meeting and the Milwaukee Homeless Connect event.

- October 27th-28th – Superior: Spoke at the Northwest local Continuum of Care monthly meeting, met Superior Mayor Jim Paine, attended a meeting with Senator Bewley and representatives from the Superior Police Department, Douglas County Human Services and Douglas County Veterans Office. I also visited the renovation project Harbor House Crisis Shelters is converting for permanent supportive housing that received \$16,500 from the WHEDA Dividend Grant program.
- October 29th – Wausau, Stevens Point and Waupaca: In Wausau, I visited the Salvation Army’s emergency shelter, Catholic Charities’ warming center and met with Diane Sennholz and Chandra Wakefield at North-Central CAP. In Stevens Point, I visited the Salvation Army emergency shelter and in Waupaca I visited Foundations for Living warming center at the invitation of director Wilma Akright.
- November 2nd – Kenosha: I attended the Racine and Kenosha Counties’ Veterans Stand-down event and met with Zach Zdroik, Racine County Veterans Service Officer, and Ali Nelson, Director of the Division for Veterans Services for Kenosha County.
- November 6th – Sheboygan and Wisconsin Dells: I spoke at the WISCAP Board of Directors meeting in Sheboygan and attended the Wisconsin Housing First Coalition’s town hall meeting in Wisconsin Dells.
- November 8th – Wisconsin Dells: I gave a presentation on the Council and state homelessness policy to the Balance of State Continuum of Care.
- November 21st – Richland Center: At the invitation of Richland County Homelessness Prevention Coalition, I met with Mayor Mike Kaufman, Alder Diane Cox, Zoning Administrator Bill McCorkle, Pastor Leland Schmidt of Lydia’s House Ministries and Chelsea Wunnicke of the UW Extension Richland County and the RCHPC to discuss an emergency shelter being proposed for downtown Richland Center.
- December 12<sup>th</sup> – Appleton: At the invitation of Appleton Housing Authority, I attended their annual “Home for the Holidays” luncheon and graduation celebration for participants in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

***Another duty is to identify areas of policy for focusing state resources.*** Throughout this year, we identified areas where we will be directing efforts for 2020.

In Milwaukee, we were drawn to the encampment that sprung up under the Marquette Interchange. The multi-arrayed efforts of the Milwaukee County, the City of Milwaukee, non-profit agencies and the business community, along with the cooperation of the Department of Transportation, were successful in closing the encampment and providing shelter for everybody who needed it and asked for it. We will be studying these efforts and other best practices nationwide to more proactively assist communities in the future when these encampments happen.

A concern that was identified this year is the issue of growing homelessness in Wisconsin’s smaller communities and their responses to it. To this end, I have been grateful to be working with Brad Pfaff, the new Director of the Office of Business and Rural Development at the Department of Administration on affordable housing solutions for rural Wisconsin.

On any given night, there are about 350 homeless veterans in Wisconsin. I believe this is a number we can bring down in the short term and will be working with the Department of Veterans Affairs, federal VA and county veterans offices to develop a strategy to end veteran homelessness as we know it in Wisconsin.

*A third duty is to serve as a conduit between levels of government.* In addition to the work with communities and counties detailed above, I have been working with Dale Darrow of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Beverly Ebersold of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness to learn of federal resources and policies that can assist people in Wisconsin.

Additionally, I will be continuing to work with counties and municipalities to find ways to help them develop affordable housing and look forward to the continued assistance from WHEDA and other agencies on this issue.

*And finally, there is a duty for me to serve as a resource for the citizens of Wisconsin on matters of homelessness.* This may be the most satisfying part of my job. I regularly receive contacts from agencies and people around Wisconsin who need help connecting with homeless services, connecting with state agencies to help others or require assistance for their agencies to better serve people. I have spent a considerable amount of time providing technical support to help where we can in these situations.

One example of this comes from September when I visited Clark County. When I met Judy Morrow at House of Mercy, she told me the story of a family who recently took shelter there. One of the children in her family was having difficulty getting to school in another area of the county where there wasn't shelter and where the child was enrolled. I was able to connect with the Department of Public Instruction to ensure the school district followed their obligations through McKinney-Vento to provide transportation for the student to school. This was Judy's response a couple days later:

*'I just got the best news ever. Our student in the HoM starts school on Monday. He is very appreciative. The school has hired a van and a driver to drive him to and from school. Thank you so much. We could not have done it without your help.'*

As I look ahead to 2020, I would be quite remiss if I didn't mention my gratitude for many people who have been helpful in our work. In addition to leadership at council agencies, the assistance of many experienced and knowledgeable staff was vital in our work this year. Our partners representing the different continua of care have been very supportive of our efforts as they work very hard for their communities.

And even though we have had some partisan challenges in regards to securing extra funding to fight homelessness, I would like to acknowledge the support and cooperation I've received from my predecessor Michael Luckey and for legislators and staff on both sides of the aisle who share our desire to better help homeless people in Wisconsin. Their efforts make me hopeful that we can soon achieve bi-partisan success on this front. For all of this I am quite grateful."

## **Looking forward**

The Interagency Council on Homelessness looks forward to the following in 2020:

- 1) Hopefully seeing a resolution for the funding currently on hold with the Legislature.
- 2) Devoting time at each workgroup meeting to focusing on a single state agency - including a review of areas where state agencies intersect with homelessness with an eye on improving state policy and cooperation to better deliver services to get people into housing and keep them there.
- 3) Doing a 2-year review and update of the "Hand and a Home" plan.