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From: Coulee Tenants United <couleetenantsunited@gmail.com>
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To: ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: 24-0279

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Coulee Tenants United supports 24-0279, "Resolution appropriating ARPA funds in the amount of \$60,000 in connection with Legal Action of Wisconsin's project entitled Eviction Defense Project to establish a service to provide free legal assistance for families that are at risk of eviction."

Since early 2022, Coulee Tenants United has tracked evictions filed in La Crosse County and provided renters facing eviction with information about their rights and resources which might be able to help them.

Without the advice of a lawyer, renters facing eviction often have nowhere to turn for information about law and court processes, especially relating to the details of their particular situation. Coulee Tenants United cannot and does not provide this kind of assistance, because we do not have a Bar-admitted lawyer nor the funding to hire one. Renters facing eviction almost universally lack the knowledge and financial ability to hire a private lawyer. Landlords, on the other hand, have experience, knowledge, and lawyers and other professional services that give them major advantages in small claims court. As a result, the scales are weighed in their favor, and renters miss out on rights, opportunities, and court procedures which could help them.

Legal Action's services are invaluable. Since June 2023, they have been providing legal advice right in the courthouse, where there are as few barriers to access as possible. We, in turn, direct renters who contact us to take advantage of this, sometimes even telling them exactly where in the room to look for Legal Action's table.

As part of our eviction tracking and intervention, we have compiled exhaustive data on evictions in La Crosse County, a summary of which can be viewed on our Instagram page here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C3ZObCoOfco/> In addition to the information on these slides, it should be noted that even though the City of La Crosse has about half of La Crosse County's population, about 80% of eviction filings are in La Crosse.

Considering the tremendous struggle that the City has had with providing housing to our homeless population, we should consider eviction prevention to be homelessness prevention; eviction prevention, we believe, also makes it more likely for an individual to get an eviction record sealed in the court system, which means a landlord will not be able to use it to deny them housing in the future.

We urge the La Crosse City Council to approve 24-0279 to maintain Legal Action's Eviction Defense Project.

Kevin Hundt
Chair, Coulee Tenants United