

ENDING HOMELESSNESS: WITHIN THE COULEE COALITION

Carrie Poser

CoC Director, WI Balance of State CoC

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Homeless Services & Funding



- Addressing the needs of vulnerable people in our community is complicated and requires commitment, capacity, and funding.
- Services, best practices, housing interventions, and funding are guided by policy and process established within multiple layers.
 - At the Federal level:
 - HUD is the department that administers funding for case management, rental assistance, emergency shelter, outreach, and prevention. There are other departments that also have funding for homelessness, including HHS, DOJ, and VA. With COVID, Treasury also joined to administer relief funds for those at risk of homelessness.
 - Policy is established by the United State Interagency Council, comprised of each department & overseen by a Director <https://www.usich.gov/>
 - Federal Regulations (24 CFR 578) and Federal Statute (Public Law 111-22, HEARTH ACT) authorize and require the CoC (Continuum of Care) Program.
 - CoCs are required to create a system to help sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness and provide services necessary to help them access housing and obtain long-term stability.
 - The homeless response must be a coordinated system as opposed to programs and funding sources operating independently within a community.
 - At the State level:
 - Many State agencies receive the federal funds for homeless services, including Dept. of Administration, Health Services, Veteran Affairs, and Children & Families. Those state agencies contract with local agencies to provide the services. There are additional funds awarded by the State as well.
 - Policy is established by the Wisconsin Interagency Council, comprised of each department, the 4 CoC leaders, and overseen by a Director. <https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/AboutDOA/ICH.aspx>
 - At the Local level:
 - Many communities receive funds directly from Federal partners, State partners, and the CoC (Continuum of Care). Some cities and counties awarded additional funds as well.
 - Policy is established from local government, through contract expectations, and/or the CoC.

There are 4 CoC in Wisconsin: Dane, Milwaukee, Racine & everything else . . .



- The **Balance of State CoC** is a 501 c3 organization is governed by a volunteer Board and run by a President (aka CoC Director). The mission is to **end homelessness** by supporting local coalitions throughout Wisconsin.
 - The Corporation has 21 members which are local homeless coalitions. Not an agency or a person. Coulee coalition (made of up La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, and Monroe counties) is 1 of those members.
- The Corporation has 4 full-time staff (2 are located in La Crosse).
- The volunteer Board of Directors includes representation from each coalition and additional members representing certain subpopulations. Coulee has representation from 3 different perspectives (more than any other 1 coalition).
 - Kristina Bechtel – La Crosse County (coalition rep)
 - Kim Cable – Couleecap (subpopulation: chronic homeless)
 - Randall Brown – person with lived experience
- The CoC staff provide:
 - Training & technical assistance to coalitions and providers
 - Administers grants, contracting with local agencies
 - Conducts monitoring and compliance reviews
 - Analyzes data and performance
 - Oversees twice a year point-in-time (PIT) count, coordinated entry process, and written program standards.
 - Advocacy efforts at State and Federal level
 - Consults with other 3 CoC leaders
 - Voting member of WI Interagency Council

Ending Homelessness (Functional Zero)



- “Ending Homelessness” means every community will have a systematic response in place that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can’t be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.
- A systematic response requires a **continuum of service** that can:
 - **Quickly identify** and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness.
 - Intervene to **prevent** the loss of housing and divert people from entering the homelessness services system.
 - When homelessness does occur, provide **immediate access** to shelter and crisis services, without barriers to entry, while permanent stable housing and appropriate supports are being secured, and quickly connect people to housing assistance and services—**tailored** to their unique needs and strengths—to help them achieve and maintain stable housing.

Continuum of Services



- **Emergency Services** – point of entry into the homeless system; congregate buildings or hotel/motel vouchers
- **Outreach** – intentional efforts to engage those that are unwilling, unaware or unable to accept emergency shelter services. Ensuring that everyone that is homeless has access to coordinated entry
- **Permanent Housing** – permanent housing solutions; including funded housing interventions, voucher programs, or self resolution; based on client choice
- **Rapid Re-housing (RRH)** – funding to pay for rental assistance and case management to help people exit homelessness as quickly as possible, move to permanent housing and achieve stability. The core components are housing identification, short- & medium-term rental assistance, and case management.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** – funding to pay for leasing costs and case management to help people exit homelessness. This project type is specifically designed for those with significant barriers, long term episodes of homelessness, and disabilities.
- **Prevention** – targeted assistance to help those at risk of homelessness maintain their housing

More information on each project type & questions to consider: [Handout #1](#)

Housing First

- WI Interagency Council – Statewide Action Plan for Homelessness (approved Dec 2021):
 - The Council supports the principles of Housing First for all programs that serve people experiencing homelessness in Wisconsin. The success of Housing First requires **sufficient investment in wrap-around supportive services** to address client needs such as mental health disorders, substance abuse disorders, life skills training, case management and job training and placement. Additionally, success also requires the embrace of person-centered, evidence-based, trauma-informed, and culturally competent practices that promote housing stability.
- HUD – Definition of Housing First:
 - An approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness **to permanent housing** without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.

Homelessness by Household Type

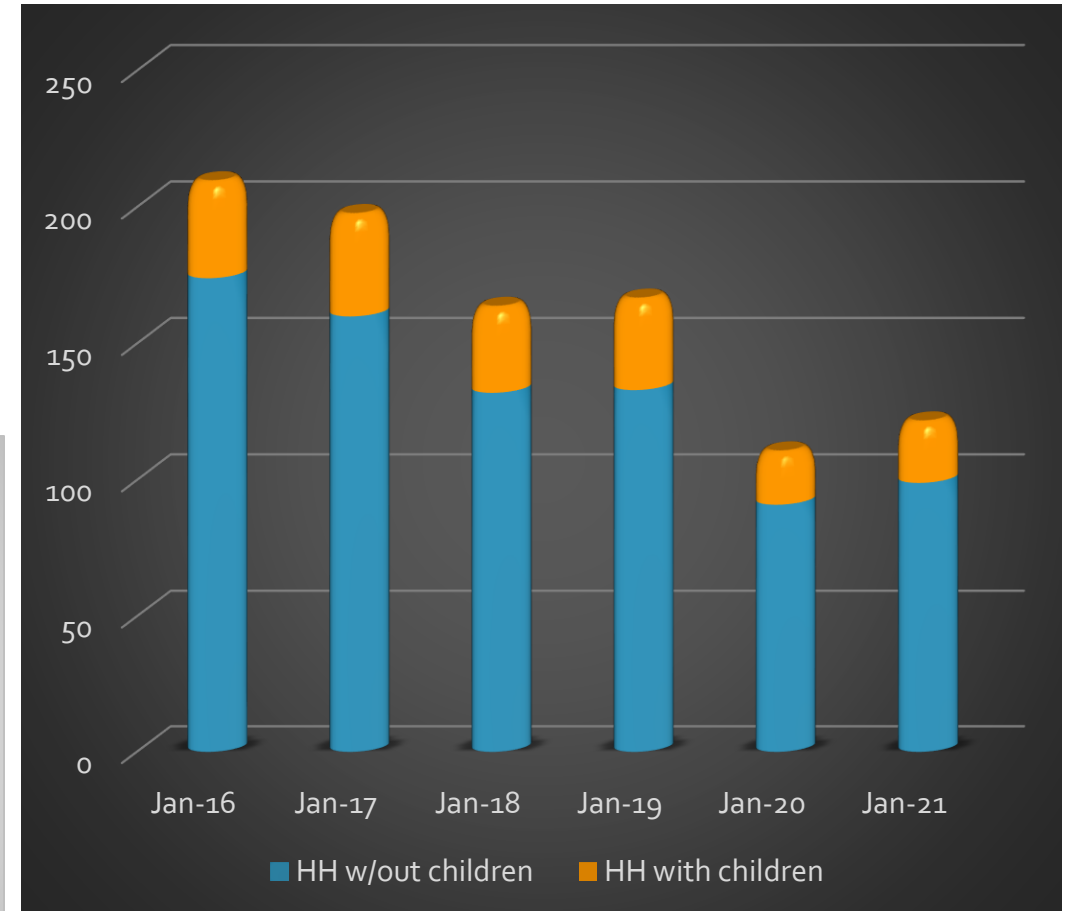
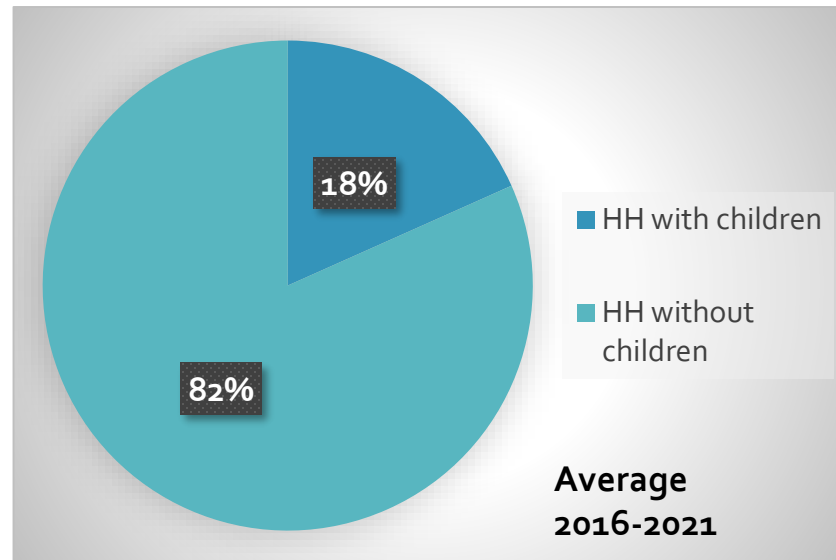


	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	Jan 2019
HH w/out	174 83%	160 81%	132 81%	133 80%
HH with	35 17%	37 19%	31 19%	33 20%

Point-in-Time:

- 4th Wednesday Jan & July
- Includes sheltered & unsheltered, domestic violence providers, non-gov't funded projects
- Snapshot of community

	Jan 2020	Jan 2021
HH w/out	91 83%	99 82%
HH with	19 17%	22 18%



HH = Household

HH w/out = household that does not include any children (under 18)

HH w/ = household that includes at least 1 adult and at least 1 child (under the age of 18)

Shelter Data



HMIS Data only	10.1.19 – 9.30.20	10.1.20 – 9.30.21	Lacrosse County (20-21)
Total Clients	562	674	523
Clients in HH w/kids	135 (24%)	215 (32%)	151 (29%)
Clients in HH w/out kids	427 (76%)	459 (68%)	372 (71%)
Veterans	40	31	26
Age 65+	25	19	18
Clients with Disabilities	349	384	318
Typical Client	44 years old Male White Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino Non-Veteran With a disability Not in a family	43 years old Male White Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino Non-Veteran Without a disability Not in a family	

HMIS = Homeless Management Information System

Coulee - Coordinated Entry



Households without Children	1/10/22
Currently waiting on the Prioritization List	161 people
Chronic Homeless	38 people
Veterans	8 people
Youth (18-24)	9 people
Fleeing Domestic Violence	15 people
Average Length of Time (LOT) on the list	146 days
Longest Length of Time (LOT) on the list	801 days

Households with Children	1/10/22
Currently waiting on the Prioritization List	23 households
Chronic Homeless	1 household
Veterans	1 household
Youth (18-24)	2 households
Fleeing Domestic Violence	6 households
Average Length of Time (LOT) on the list	99 days
Longest Length of Time (LOT) on the list	257 days

To end the homelessness for these identified and assessed households, the Coulee coalition would need **184 more permanent housing solutions** – which includes rental assistance and funding for case management services.

Coulee Coalition

- In 2011, Couleecap was selected by the CoC for the 1st housing first permanent supportive housing program in the Balance of State.
- In 2016, La Crosse became the 1st city in Wisconsin to end veteran homelessness.
- In 2021, the Housing Authority of the City of La Crosse adopted a homeless preference for all of its housing programs.
 - La Crosse joins a small group of cities who have accomplished this (Eau Claire, Green Bay, and Wausau).
- Strengths:
 - Coalition includes strong engagement from private and public sector within the coalition, including participation at the city and county level.
 - Coulee coalition is one of the only in the CoC to have a consumer advisory council.

Strong Coalition

- Diverse perspectives including people with lived experience
- Focused on ending homelessness, not managing it
- Willing to be creative and focused on needs of the population

Strong Homeless Crisis Response System

- Ensure that the system includes: prevention, diversion, outreach, intake & assessment, emergency services, housing solutions, and case management
- How much of each service is needed, what performance is expected, what outcomes are reached, what can be improved?
- Enhance coordinated entry system to ensure all people experiencing homelessness have access to prioritization list referral

Commitment to Ending Homelessness

- Case conferencing, problem solving, and seeking permanent housing solutions for everyone identified as homeless
- Enhanced case management with team approach across sectors (including mental health and addiction services & supports), using housing first philosophy, being client centered and trauma informed
- Focus on reducing inflow into the system and increasing outflow with positive client outcomes

Top 5 Things Needed to End Homelessness

Affordable Housing

- Must have places for people to live
- Units must be affordable (below 60% County Median Income, focus on 0-30% County Median Income)
- Units must be accessible and meet basic housing quality standards (safe and sanitary)
- Units must be rent reasonable and within fair market rent for the community

Landlords of Existing Properties

- Willing to work with people who are seeking to end their homelessness
 - Issues with credit or no credit
 - Negative rental history or no rental history
 - Criminal background
- Willing to accept housing vouchers
- Willing to make necessary repairs to bring units into compliance with basic housing quality standards

Top 5 Things Needed to End Homelessness

Contact Information



Carrie Poser

CoC Director

Wisconsin Balance of State CoC

carrie.poser@wibos.org

PO Box 272, Eau Claire, WI 54702

Phone: 715-598-3301

Website: www.wiboscoc.org