



August 8, 2023

To the La Crosse City Council,

I am writing in support of Independent Living Resources (ILR) and their request for funding for street outreach services for people experiencing homelessness. Homeless Street Outreach is considered an essential service by Couleecap and other local housing providers. Requested funding would enable these services to continue through 2024. Losing this service would be detrimental to our ability to move people from the parks and streets into housing.

Homeless Street Outreach was first established through the La Crosse Collaborative to End Homelessness, where nonprofit, city representatives, and local funders determined a need to better identify, understand, and connect unhoused people to housing and shelter services. At the time, this was a critical gap in our system. Through community-solicited funding, ILR created the team to build trusting relationships with the unsheltered population, distribute life-saving services, ensure housing needs are documented through Coordinated Entry, and connect people to shelter and housing programs. Before the ILR Outreach Team was established, unsheltered people were, many times, invisible since local housing and shelter providers could not dedicate full time staff to this effort. Over the past four years, the ILR Homeless Street Outreach team has enabled countless numbers of people to receive local services, healthcare, and find housing.

The ILR Homeless Street Outreach team is a trusted resource – trusted by people they serve and housing/shelter agencies. As we continue our community effort to plan and execute strategies to reach 'Homelessness Functional Zero', the ILR Homeless Outreach team will be crucial to success.

We urge you to approve funding for the ILR Homeless Street Outreach project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Hetti Brown
Executive Director, Couleecap

