



**HOUSING OUR NEIGHBORS
PLANNING COLLABORATIVE
OF EAU CLAIRE COUNTY**

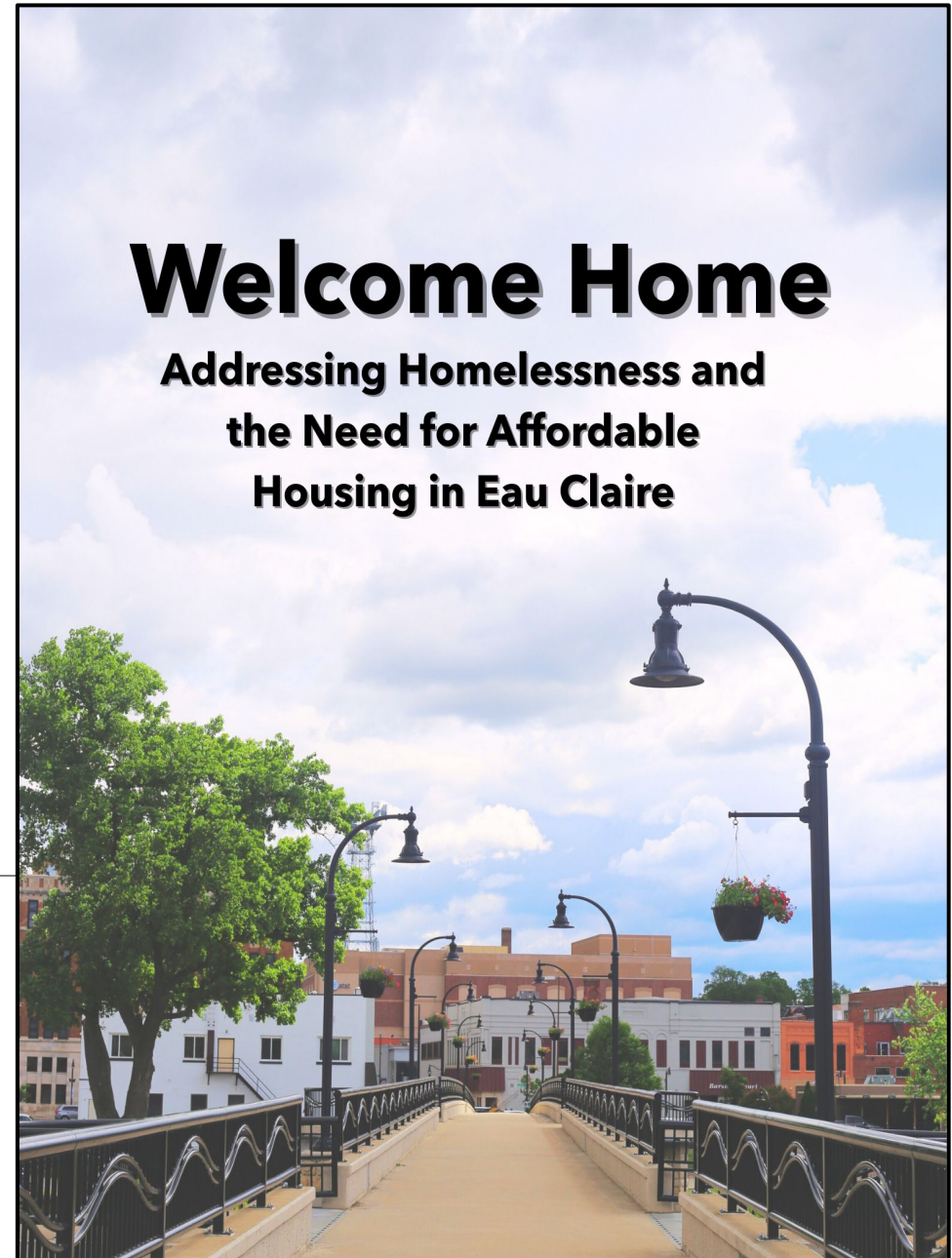
Utilizing Shared Housing to Decrease Homelessness

Addressing Homelessness in Eau Claire County

“Community is much more than belonging to something; it’s about doing something together that makes belonging matter.”
— Brian Solis

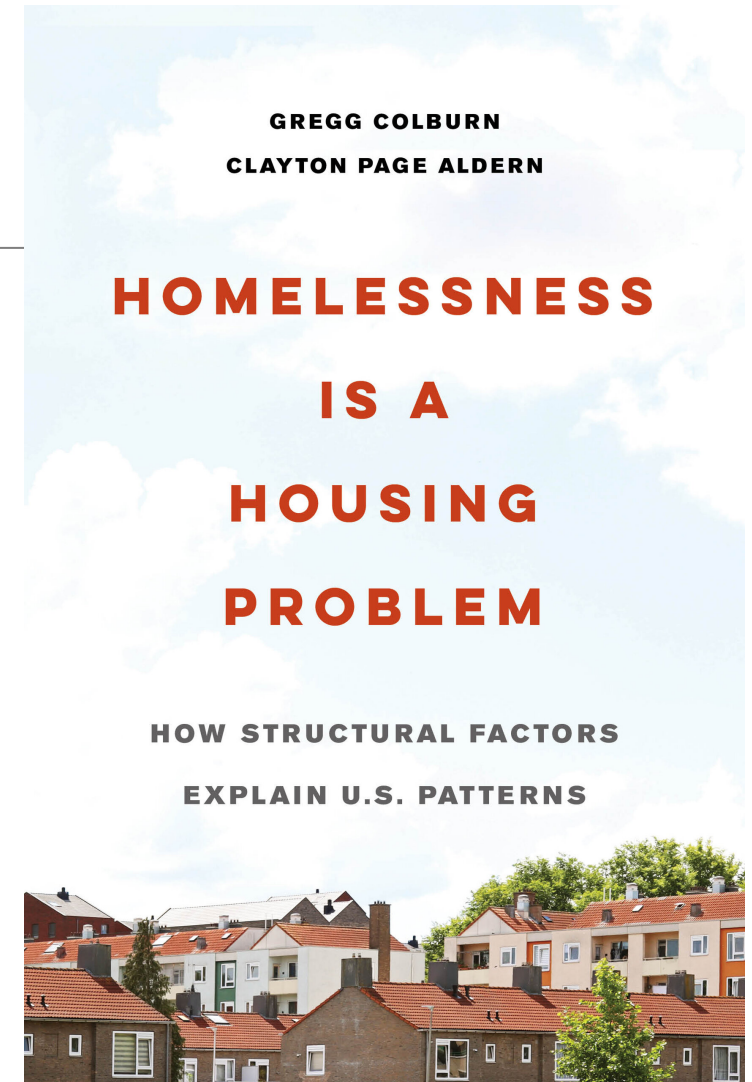
Welcome Home

**Addressing Homelessness and
the Need for Affordable
Housing in Eau Claire**



Objectives:

- Provide background information on collaborative homelessness work in Eau Claire County
- Share current data
- Review the process of how we came to create shared housing through the Department of Human Services as part of the housing solution
- Explain what shared housing is and its advantages
- Highlight current success stories



Results of the work in Eau Claire County

- First individual housed in shared housing in November of 2025 by the Housing Our Neighbors Collaborative
- We have **housed 65 more individuals** since November with supports:
 - 26 of these are children
 - All but 4 individuals came directly off the streets
 - Two families were defected away from shelter and directly into housing
 - 13 are in shared housing
 - 8 more shared housing slots available in August
- We are **currently working in some way with 172 individuals** on our by-name list who are homeless



What Shared Housing Means to Me

“When I moved into shared housing, I wasn’t just given a place to sleep. I was welcomed into a shared living environment where I was no longer alone in trying to rebuild my life.

For the first time in a long time, I had stability and I also had people around me. That sense of community made a difference. It gave me connection, accountability, and support in everyday life. It also allowed me to reconnect with my community, continue my work with the Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAB) of Eau Claire, and advocate for others in my situation to help improve the homeless response system for others.

Shared housing wasn’t just about having a roof over my head. It was about learning how to live alongside others again, share space, and be part of something bigger than myself. It was the bridge that made everything possible.

Housing doesn’t just change where you live. Shared housing changes how you live-and what you believe is possible.” -Mara

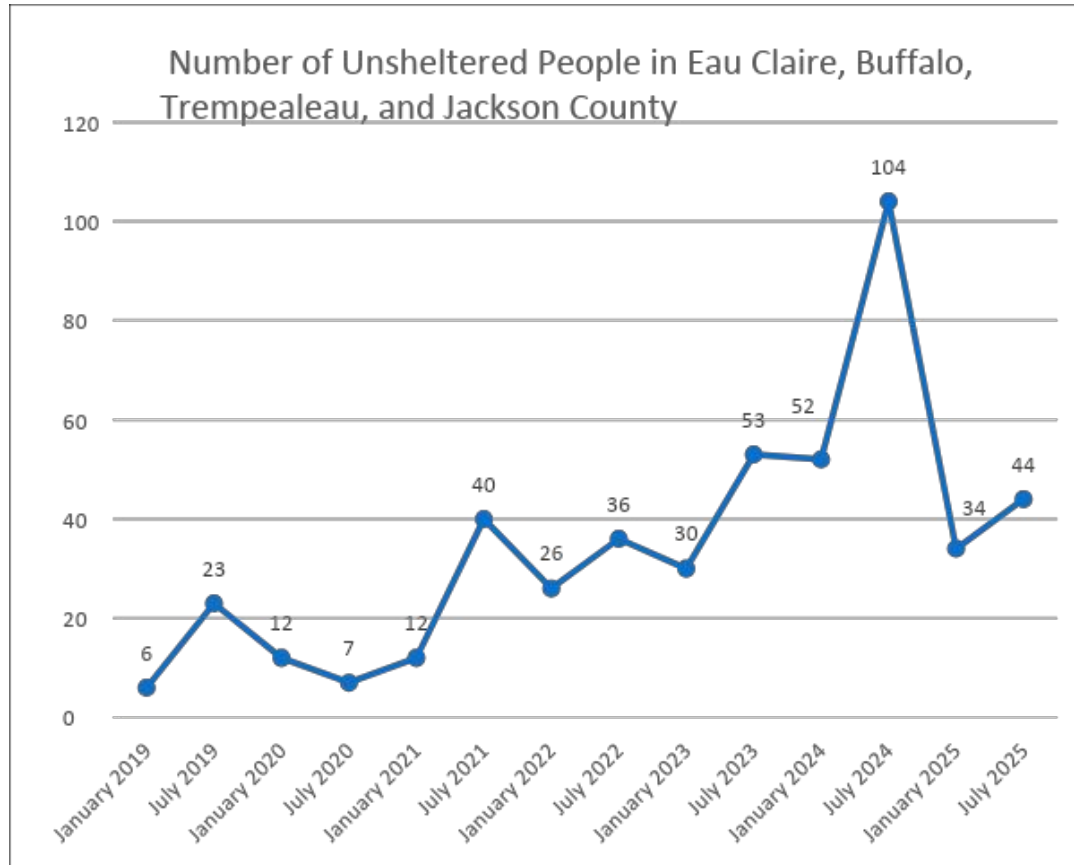


Lived Experience is Crucial

“Our first battle in ending homelessness is realizing people who experience homelessness are human. Someone who is unhoused in your community is your neighbor.”

—National Coalition for Ending Homelessness

Homelessness in Eau Claire is on the rise



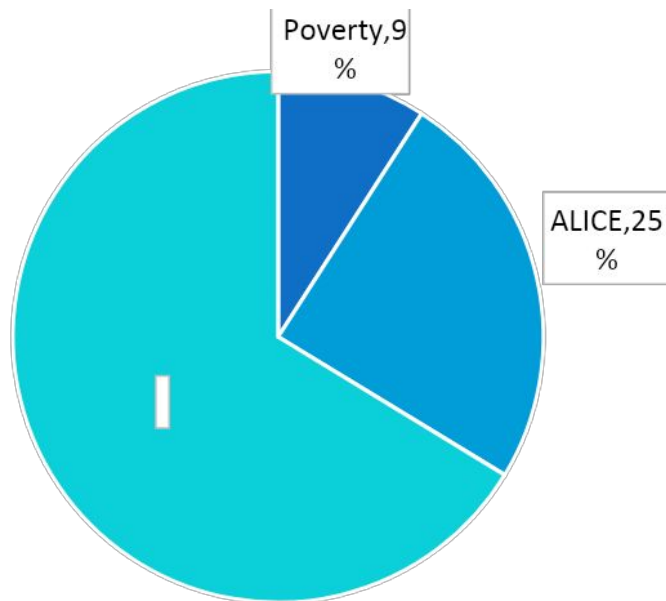
Low vacancy rate

Net loss in affordable housing
over the last 10 years

Eau Claire is in the middle of a
rural area with few resources

Many Are At Risk

1/3 of Eau Claire residents cannot afford basic needs



\$21

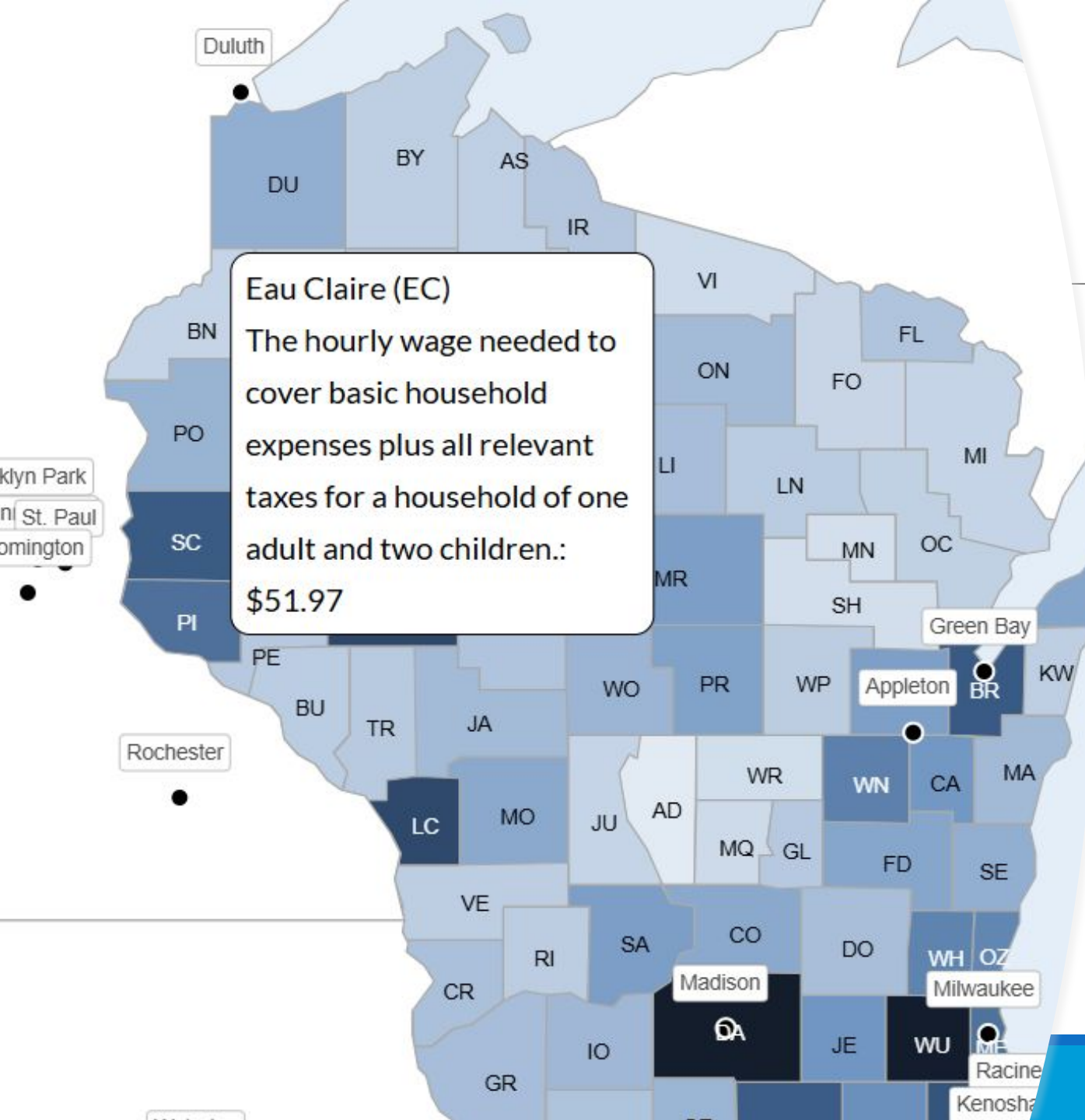
Wage renters must make to afford a 2-bedroom apartment

116

Hours people earning minimum wage must work in a week to afford a 2-bedroom apartment

37%

Of renters are cost-burdened (spending more than 30% of their income on rent)



\$51.97/hour
(one adult with two children)

Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmap

Homelessness is Expensive

\$40

Cost of staying in a shelter overnight for **one night**

\$354

Cost of a **single filing** with the Eau Claire County legal system

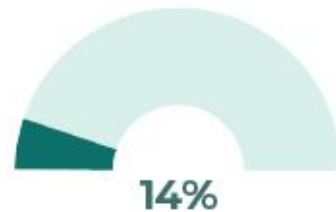
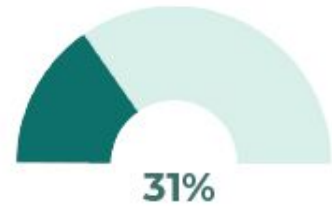
\$112

Cost of staying in the Eau Claire County Jail for **one night**

\$1756

Cost of **one day** of adult psychiatric services at Mendota and Winnebago Mental Health Institute

Community Health Survey...



Identified as a Community Priority in 2024

Top five issues most in need of improvement in the community:

1. Alcohol misuse
2. Poor mental health
3. Lack of access to childcare or unaffordable childcare
4. Substance misuse
5. Lack of safe or affordable housing

How the Collaborative Started

The film *Beyond the Bridge: A Solution to Homelessness* was brought to Eau Claire. Other efforts, like the Day Resource Center, are launched by the community.

September 2024

Jim Mathy from the Milwaukee County Housing Department presented to community representatives and small groups (housing, law enforcement, EC Chamber board, and Jonah/Dairyland Leadership)

December 2024

Data is summarized and used to create six strategies. Local data and context is added to the plan, and the Planning Collaborative meets regularly to review and edit the document. A meeting is held with service providers to review strategies

June-October 2025

October 2024

The EC City-County Health Department, EC County DHS, and the EC Area Chamber of Commerce commit to bringing Eau Claire together to address homelessness

May 2025

Information was collected from service providers, local leadership, community members, and other interested entities to inform the community strategy

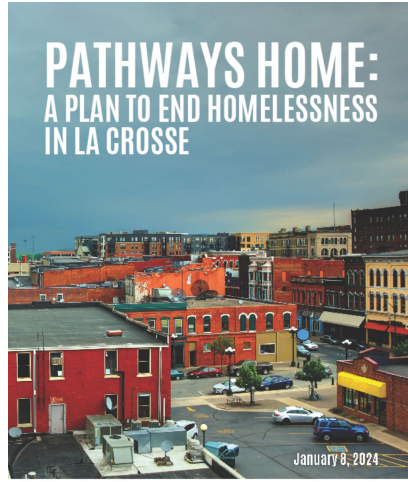
January 2026

Community strategies approved by Planning Collaborative. The document is sent out to service providers and interested entities for final feedback



GREATER GREEN BAY BLUEPRINT
TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS

CSH 30 Years of Supportive
Housing Solutions



Knowledge Building and Network Outreach

- Met with local communities to learn about their processes and findings
- Emphasized a need for:
 - Clear leadership and accountability
 - Accessible and affordable housing with services
 - A public facing document with shared goals and strategies to lead the work

Taxpayers have saved over **\$30 million** or **\$3.5 million** per year since Housing First.

Housing First policy impact on homelessness in Milwaukee

Rates of homelessness remained stagnant for a decade before Milwaukee County implemented Housing First policy at the end of 2015.

↓ 46.3%

Overall homeless
population reduced by
46.3% in 5 years

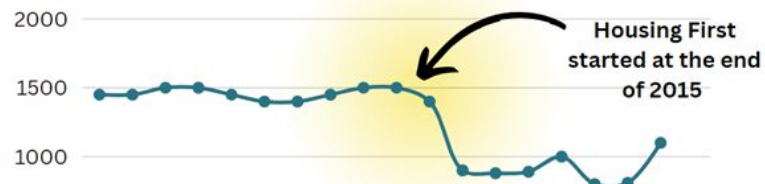
↓ 91.8%

Unsheltered, street
homelessness reduced by
91.8% in 5 years

↓ 65%

Sheltered chronic
homelessness reduced by
65% as of 2023

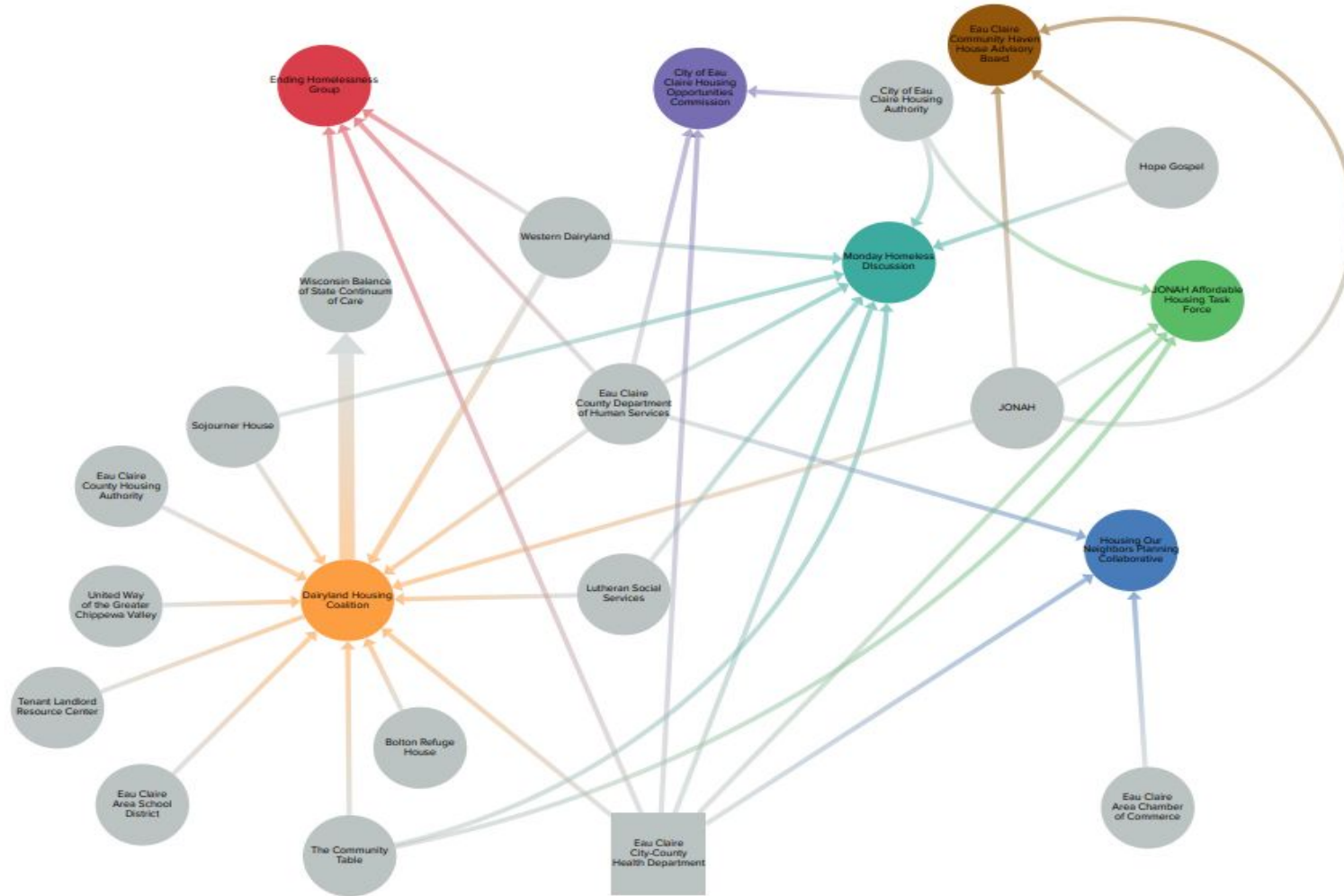
Overall Homelessness in Milwaukee County 2007-2023



Input into the Plan

- Three meetings held with homelessness service providers
 - Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results
 - Theory of change activity
 - Review resource map
- Citizen's assembly hosted by University of Wisconsin-Madison La Follette School of Public Affairs
 - Invitation distributed across Eau Claire
 - 20 people selected as representative sample
- Survey sent to City Council, City department heads, Board of Health, County Board, and local leaders

Significant work has been done



OUR GOAL

**Homelessness is brief,
rare, and non-recurring
in Eau Claire County**

What Does This Report Do?

- Provides information on the current state of homelessness in Eau Claire through local data
- Gathered feedback from service providers, local leaders, organizations, and people with lived experience to identify what we need to do to reach our goal of function zero in Eau Claire
- List six strategies that act as guideposts as we continue to work and build a collaborative system



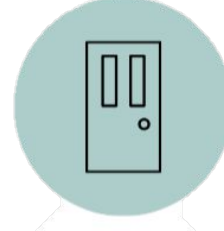
**Align the
system**



**Strategic
data
sharing**



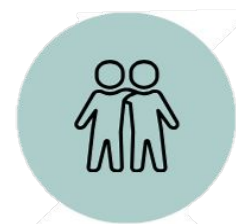
**Strengthen
outreach**



**Prevent
homelessness**



**Ensure
affordable
housing**



**Community
outreach**

What Does This Report *NOT* Do?

Tell people what to do

- Strategies are guided by the community
- Flexibility is intentional

Repeat past or current efforts

- Prevents duplication
- Builds on existing work

HOUSING OUR NEIGHBORS COLLABORATIVE EXECUTIVE TEAM



- Provide centralized leadership and background support to collaborative efforts addressing homelessness
- Track metrics to ensure we are reaching our desired outcomes

Strategy 3: Strengthen Outreach

One-Year Action Items

- Design, fund, and launch a multidisciplinary, trauma-informed outreach team for Eau Claire County
- Encourage opportunities to integrate and expand peer support services across our local homelessness response system
- Identify and engage people with the most frequent law enforcement interactions and focus on diversion and trauma-informed engagement

Example Metrics to Measure Progress

- Number of interactions with people experiencing homelessness and the homeless response system
- Number of referrals made and followed up on
- Number of emergency services and law enforcement encounters responding to neighbors experiencing homelessness

Strategy 5: Ensure Affordable Housing

Develop and maintain genuinely affordable, permanent housing with integrated supportive services for everyone in our community



Develop a comprehensive housing plan that builds on the 2023 Eau Claire Regional Housing Study.



Support the development of affordable housing stock through a variety of funding sources



Support creation of local subsidy program and encourage business incentives for workforce housing



Promote the building of public housing and public-nonprofit collaborative housing



Expand availability of housing by building relationships with landlords and exploring opportunities to support housing

What Street Outreach Noticed

- Lack of housing
- Barriers prevented those with funding to get into housing
- Growing proportion of individuals on the street are elderly
- Many individuals on the street had a disability



How We Responded

- Met with local landlords who had shared housing to ask ?s
- Talked with experts
- Identified shared housing as an option
- Worked with our county to create a master lease
- Worked with local landlords to secure housing



Alliance Pressure Points Resource Series
Shared Housing Fact Sheet



What is shared housing?

Shared housing is an affordable housing model in which a person experiencing homelessness lives with two or more people in one permanent housing unit, sharing the rent and utilities. Each person living in the unit is listed on the lease. It often involves working closely with people experiencing homelessness to help match them with potential housemates, negotiating with landlords, and consistently engaging with all parties to ensure that the arrangement is appropriate.

For people to live in a shared housing arrangement successfully, everyone — from providers, to landlords, to the people being housed, to case managers — must believe that shared housing can work and have active investment in its success.



What is Shared Housing and Why Use It?

- An affordable housing model in where two or more folks live in a **permanent housing unit** sharing rent and utilities
- Strengthens social support networks
- Can access housing more quickly
- Creates less strain on the homelessness system
- Benefit to local landlords because it includes guaranteed rent and reduces their vacancy rates



How Shared Housing Works in Eau Claire County

1. Eau Claire County Department of Human Services signs a master lease
2. Our Street Outreach Team works with individuals who are homeless to determine both who wants shared housing and uses an assessment to determine who might be a good fit to live together.
3. Interested individuals sign a sublease rental agreement and other paperwork associated with renting (ex: 12 hour notice) and a program agreement
4. Individuals pay which ever is lower:
 - 25% of the rent/utilities + \$50 a month*
 - 40% of their income

*we provided shared items: cleaning supplies, laundry detergent etc
5. Individuals receive case management based on individually developed goals

Who is Currently In Shared Housing

- 40-year-old: 10 years of homelessness with a history of both mental health concerns and substance misuse; history of police contact
- 52-year-old: 3 years of homelessness over 5 different episodes; eviction on record; history of both mental health concerns and substance misuse; history of police contact
- 32-year-old: 5 years of homelessness; history of substance misuse, history of police contact and significant criminal record
- 57-year-old: over 1 year of homelessness; history of both mental health concerns and substance misuse, wheelchair bound; significant criminal record
- 20-year-old; history of both mental health concerns and substance misuse, history of police contact and criminal record

Where Are We Getting Housing and How Are We Paying For It

Where the Housing Comes From

- Three four-bedroom units from private landlord, used to be student rentals
- One four-bedroom house is from the City Housing Authority
- The Department of Human Services is repurposing a Sober Living House

How We Are Paying For Housing

- Private Donation from a local foundation to cover 20 hard to house individuals rent for 1-year @ \$1,000 dollars each plus 1 case manager and 1 data analysts
- County Opioid Dollars
- Leveraged 1915i funding
- Comprehensive Community Supports (CCS) for case management support
- Funds diverted from Behavioral Health Budgets from placements

Strategy 6: Heightening Community Engagement

Build a deeply engaged community that understands, supports, and actively participates in ending homelessness



Collect, develop, and share stories that create a common, shared narrative while still exploring nuances



Engage faith groups, businesses and other residents to support our neighbors who are homeless and people recently housed



Ensure natural supports are embedded in personal housing plans



Create purposeful community education about homelessness

What Has Supported the Work

- Having a Street Outreach Team* that meets individuals where they are at, builds relationships, and shares what individuals who are homeless share they need *hiring very important
- We created a Release of Information (ROI) with over 20 local service providers on it so we can share information with each other and individuals that are homeless do not have to tell their story repeatedly
- The City of Eau Claire Housing Authority and Eau Claire County Housing Authority collaborated to create a 4-page housing application; they've also signed the ROI
- Eau Claire County has begun initial steps toward a county-wide housing assessment
- Relationships with local law enforcement and Neighbor Services have led to significant collaboration
- Creating a shared set of house rules with the individuals in the shared housing
- We have gotten results so folks are paying attention

What Happens Next?

- We continue to get individuals into housing with services that matches their needs and preferences
- We continue to monitor and meet the needs of those in housing to ensure permanent housing is secure
- We continue to monitor the paperwork and processes and make adjustments
- We are sending out a Request for Information (RFI) to bring more landlords into Master Lease
- Continue to identify funding supports for housing and supports
- As data is collected, we will add to our public dashboard to track progress toward key outcomes
- Continue to foster relationships with community partners
- Continue to implement the strategies identified in our housing report



Questions