

Income: There is a decrease in family homelessness.

Housing in Action Mobilization Plan Agenda to Action

Why It Matters

- Over 125 families are experiencing acute homelessness (staying in emergency shelter, or in a place not meant for human habitation, i.e. cars, outdoors or abandoned buildings).
- Over 600 families are currently experiencing housing insecurity (not staying in shelter but are in temporary and uncertain living situations, i.e. doubled up with friends or self-paying at a hotel).
- Children who are homeless are twice as likely to go hungry than other children, experience three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems, are more than twice as likely as others to repeat a school grade, and one quarter have witnessed acts of violence within their family.
- Lack of affordable housing is noted as the leading predictor of homelessness.
- Housing is considered to be unaffordable when it consumes more than 30 percent of a family budget, and 28,469 renters and 36,057 of homeowners in Dane County are paying between 50% and 75% of their income in rent or mortgages¹.
- Dane County's affordable housing inventory is extremely limited; we need to build 1,000 units of new affordable housing per year for 25+ years to keep pace with existing demand. While many funders, developers, and partner agencies are working to address this need, it will remain a pressing concern for decades to come².

Goal: Stabilize families through direct access to affordable housing and quality case management.

Promising/Best Practices and Research

- Families served by Housing First have 80% housing stability, compared to 37% of those served in shelters.
- Providing eviction prevention or diversion services (often including financial management assistance) to families at risk of becoming homeless can stabilize families long-term.
- Low income families with ready access to surplus food can decrease their monthly food-related costs by \$384, meaning more access to healthy foods can stretch budgets.
- Multigeneration strategies that support the parents/adults in the child's lives as well as the child's development have substantial impact in improving children's educational outcomes, increasing the earnings of adults, and providing resources for low-income families to overcome barriers to stability and economic success.

Strategies

- Housing First
- Eviction prevention and quality case management
- Landlord and tenant connections
- Access to healthy food
- Leveraging resources
- Influencing policy
- Increasing affordable inventory

2020 Community Impact Investment - \$1,646,841

- Stably house homeless families.
- Eviction prevention.
- Decrease school mobility through housing stability.
- Continue to provide housing case management training for service providers, using nationally acclaimed best practices.

2019 Progress on Housing in Action

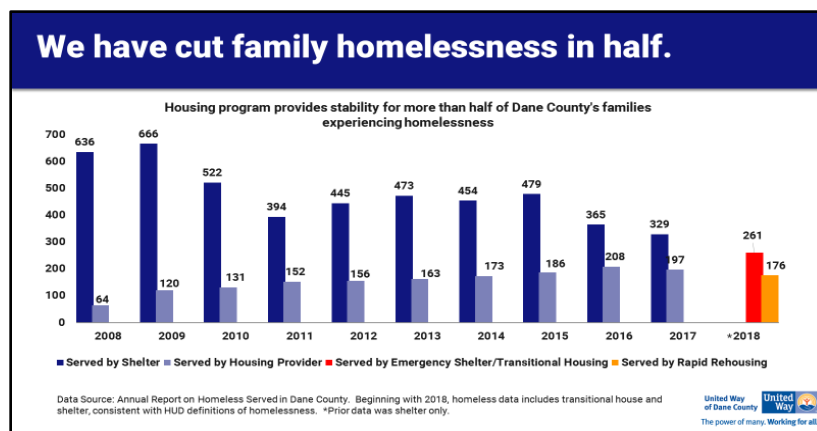
- 546 families were stability housed and 1,190 children remained in the same school through our Rapid Rehousing and Decreased School Mobility programs.
- There has been a 50% decrease in acute family homelessness in Dane County since 2014.

¹ Dane County Housing Assessment Report - 2019

² Kurt Paulson, UW Extension, Dane County Housing Needs Assessment 2019

- 45 families were enrolled in our Housing First signature initiative, marking a decade of stabilizing families in this program. We consistently exceed the national benchmark of an 80% success rate.
- Since 2008, 83% of the over 400 families served through our Housing First initiative have never returned to the shelter system, whether one, two or 10 years later.
- 1,500 families were provided housing case management in 2019, addressing root causes of their homelessness.
- Affordable Housing Fund (AHF) established within the United Way of Dane County Foundation to promote development of more affordable housing units in Dane County. The first loan in 2019 was made to Madison Development Corporation for a 44-unit apartment complex on East Washington Avenue that will open in 2020.

Measures



How We Accomplished It

By strategically investing in best practices and prioritizing a Housing First approach, we have made great strides in combatting homelessness for families in our community. The partnership with family housing providers The Road Home, Salvation Army and YWCA has led to a steady decrease of children and families using shelter over the past several years. The annual July Point-in-Time count of **chronically homeless families**, however, increased from 139 in July 2014 to 142 in July 2019. Overall, **for families** during the same time period we see the numbers decreasing from 353 in 2014 to 221 in 2019. [Source: Homeless Management Information System for Dane County]

High quality case management remains a hallmark of our success. More than 1,500 families participated in eviction prevention, housing searches, tenant-landlord conversations, bridge building to other community resources, and financial literacy programs to help them obtain or maintain housing and work towards other goals. Additional partnerships focused on school stability and Early Childhood Zones helped families with children 0-5 and school-aged children with housing assistance support.

Overall, our family homelessness system is delivering high quality results for families. However, as housing costs rise in Dane County, we remain in need of more affordable housing inventory and continued support for families whose housing costs are far outpacing their earned wages.

Dane County's supply of affordable workforce housing must be increased by 1,000 units per year or 16,000 over the next decade, to catch up and keep pace with the growing workforce. Efforts by the City of Madison, Dane County and private developers using available tax credits have been aggressive but a significant gap between need and availability remains. For the first time, United Way joined these partners in stimulating housing development through a loan provided by the United Way Affordable Housing Fund. The Fund's role is unique in providing last-dollars-in gap financing that is often critically important to bring affordable housing projects to fruition.

The Economic Stability Council, a collaboration of funders, nonprofit, business, foundation and government stakeholders was created in 2017 to provide the catalyst of financial capital to address the need for affordable workforce housing in Dane County. United Way is a founding member of the council and staffed the group in moving from broad anti-poverty discussions to narrow in on addressing housing needs. The Council engaged Madison Development Corporation in 2019 to develop the outline for the Workforce Housing Fund 1. In early 2020, area employers will be invited to make investments in the fund.

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