

8/30/19

Dear Mayor Rhodes-Conway,

We write to request additional funding in the 2020 budget for Homeless Services. The Homeless Services Consortium is a partnership of agencies, funders, advocates, and people with lived experience of homelessness who are committed to preventing and ending homelessness. The HSC believes that all households in Dane County should have the opportunity to secure and maintain safe, stable affordable housing.

There are currently 133 families and 573 single adults experiencing homelessness as defined by HUD in the City of Madison. Last year, the Madison Metropolitan School District identified 635 families who were experiencing homelessness that met the McKinney Vento definition of homelessness. It is important to note that African Americans are extremely overrepresented in the population of persons experiencing homelessness in the City of Madison. About 50% of families and individuals experiencing homelessness in the City of Madison are African American, while African Americans represent about 5% of the City's total population.

Purpose Built Shelter: A purpose built shelter is a shelter that is built for the purpose of providing shelter to persons experiencing homelessness and is one of the priorities the HSC has identified for the coming year.

- Our current homeless shelter buildings were never meant to serve as homeless shelters. The accessibility for persons with mobility issues trying to access shelter are of concern.
- We are asking for \$250,000 to be put into the budget to start the planning for a purpose built men's shelter.
- We are asking that you continue to support The Salvation Army in their process of creating a purpose built shelter for women and families.
- We are asking that the Fairchild plans for the men's shelter be reviewed and the public be updated on the progress.

Rapid Re-Housing: Programs aimed at providing flexible support and subsidy on a short-term basis to help individuals and families get into housing gain independence and housing stability.

- Rapid Rehousing has been extremely successful in our community in reducing the numbers of families experiencing homelessness.
- Currently, there is a lack of capacity in agencies serving single adults who have experienced homelessness. So while there is money going in to the community to go towards Rapid Rehousing for single adults, agencies with experience and expertise in homeless services do not have middle management and other capacity currently to apply for the dollars.
- We would like to ask that the City of Madison put \$500,000 in the 2020 budget to go towards capacity building within agencies so that by 2021 those agencies will be prepared to start and be successful with rapid rehousing programs.

Eviction Prevention: The only known factor in one's risk of experiencing homelessness is previously homelessness. This is why it is so important to prevent individuals from experiencing homelessness.

We believe that eviction prevention funds and support services is the best way that we can prevent homelessness in our community.

- We are asking for \$200,000 in Eviction Prevention funds total.
- We would like to see \$100,000 go towards providing eviction prevention support services through the Eviction Defense Project which has helped prevent a number of evictions in Dane County, especially in the City of Madison.
- We would ask that an additional \$100,000 go towards eviction prevention funds.

Homeless Services Coordination: There is much work to be done in our community to end homelessness. We would like to see a position funded by both the County of Dane and the City of Madison that could focus on increasing outside funding for homeless services, creating services for individuals who do not meet the HUD definition of homelessness, implementing best practices in ending homelessness in our community, and assisting homeless service providers in program development and capacity building for homeless service programming. A proposed position description is attached to this email.

- We are asking that the City of Madison contribute \$50,00 in funding for this position and the county contribute an additional \$50,000.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to these requests. For questions or additional information, please reach out to Jenna Schmitt, Chair of the HSC's Education and Advocacy Committee at educationandadvocacycommittee@gmail.com or by phone at 608-770-3743.

Sincerely,

Education and Advocacy Committee

Homeless Services Consortium of Dane County