



The Road Home: 10 Year Plan To End Homelessness

A Collaborative Report by the
Housing and Homelessness Coalition,
an initiative of United Way of Marathon County

November 10, 2015


United Way
of Marathon County



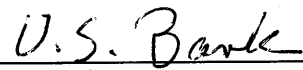
**A Statement of the Housing and Homelessness Coalition
to End Homelessness:
A Road Home, in Marathon County**

Homelessness ends with a home. Marathon County's 10 Year Plan to end homelessness is driven by many constituencies working to make stable, sustainable, and affordable housing available to every person in Marathon County. Our campaign calls upon all interested constituent groups: shelters, housing providers, service providers, state and local agencies, foundations, businesses, and private citizens to achieve our vision.

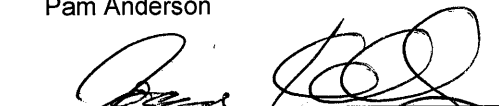
On behalf of the Housing and Homelessness Coalition, we, the Coalition Leadership Committee, commit to articulating, embracing, and implementing this plan. It is only through our united efforts that homelessness can be eradicated in Marathon County.



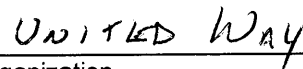
Pam Anderson



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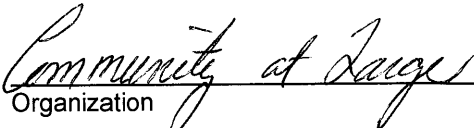
Joanne Kelly



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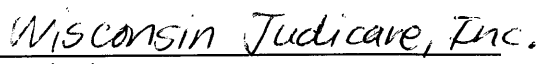
Cindy Mueller



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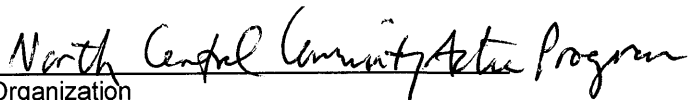
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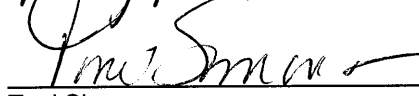
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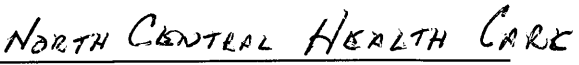
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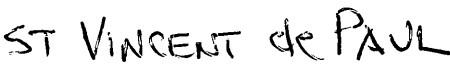
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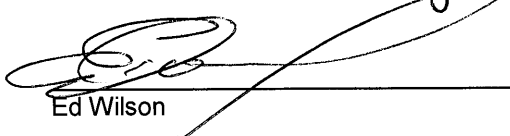
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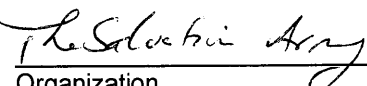
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Organization



Ed Wilson



Organization

Thank you to the following organizations for participating in the work of the Coalition to prevent and eradicate homelessness in Marathon County.

Aspirus Wausau Hospital, Inc.	Randlin Family Adult Care Homes, Inc.
AXA Advisors LLC	St. Vincent de Paul
B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation	State of Wisconsin Division of Housing
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse	Tomah VA Medical Center
Center for Veterans Issues	The Open Door of Marathon County
City Pages	The Salvation Army
Community Care Connections of Wisconsin	The Wausau Area Apartment Association
Crossroads Mental Health Services, Inc.	The Women's Community
D.C. Everest School District	United Way of Marathon County
Downtown Mission Church	University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Dudley Foundation	U.S. Bank
First United Methodist Church	WAOW Channel 9
Footlocker.com/Eastbay	Wausau City Community Development
Grebe's Inc.	Wausau City Community Development Authority
Greenheck Fan Corp.	Wausau City Fire Department
Habitat for Humanity of Wausau	Wausau City Police Department
Marathon County Health Department	Wausau Daily Herald
Marathon County Sheriff's Department	Wausau Deanery of Catholic Churches
Marathon County Department of Social Services	Wausau School District
Marathon County UW-Extension	Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs
Ministry Saint Clare's Hospital	Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
NAOMI	Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service
North Central Community Action Program	Wisconsin Judicare, Inc.
North Central Health Care	WSAW Channel 7
Office of Congressman Sean P. Duffy	Community Members
Opportunity Inc.	
Peaceful Solutions Counseling	

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To the Citizens of Marathon County

This plan is a call to action for Marathon County. It builds on the significant work of agencies, citizens, and organizations working to ensure that the basic needs of Marathon County residents are met and that safe, stable, and affordable housing options are available to all.

In 2012, United Way of Marathon County's Basic Needs Community Impact Funding Team defined housing challenges as a community priority with two goals: 1) Create a coalition focused on housing and homelessness; and 2) Write and develop a housing and homelessness plan for Marathon County.

In August of 2012, the Housing and Homelessness Coalition officially formed and was comprised of 23 member organizations and 30 individuals. In 2015, 47 member organizations and 71 individuals from various stakeholder groups comprise the Coalition. Coalition members represent a cross-section of United Way partners – business, faith-based, government, hospitals, non-profit and foundations that share a common interest in this priority.

Members of the Housing and Homelessness Coalition realize that solving homelessness is complex and is not a quick, easy fix. However, the overarching belief of members of the Coalition and many others across the nation is that eradicating homelessness is possible. The 10 Year Plan for Marathon County is a living, breathing document outlining the goals, strategies, and measures we collectively have for our community to ensure homelessness ends and more affordable housing options are created.

The goals identified in this plan are similar to those of other communities across the country. In reviewing the National Alliance to End Homelessness' database of existing plans, both the Denver, Colorado, and Dane County, Wisconsin, plans were chosen to inform the goals defined. Each goal area of this plan provides local context and mutually agreed upon actions toward collectively eradicating homelessness in Marathon County.

Snapshot: Housing and Homelessness Coalition Plan of Action

Formed in 2012 as an initiative of United Way of Marathon County, the Housing and Homelessness Coalition brings together agencies, citizens, and organizations to address housing challenges in Marathon County.

The following statements represent the Mission, Vision, and Goals of the United Way Housing and Homelessness Coalition:

Mission Statement: Collaboratively raise community awareness to end homelessness by maximizing and strengthening existing resources, developing new, relevant solutions, and creating a seamless delivery of services to end homelessness in Marathon County.

Vision Statement: Eradicate homelessness in Marathon County by collaboratively raising awareness, defining needs, and finding solutions for housing challenges.

The Coalition's goals are to:

- Create and sustain a collaborative network that prioritizes finding solutions to homelessness and housing challenges in Marathon County.
- Coordinate resources leading to stable housing outcomes.
- Identify and develop affordable housing opportunities in Marathon County.
- Connect individuals who are housing challenged to immediate, mid-, and long-range housing resources.

A Call to Action!

Individuals and families in Marathon County face homelessness every day. The community's need continues to go unmet. According to United Way's 2-1-1 2014 Basic Needs Report, housing needs, including rental assistance and access to community shelters, were the top unmet basic needs.

As indicated in the graph below, the majority of the combined 116 individuals surveyed in **April 2014 and 2015** had been homeless for more than 30 days, but less than one year. Experiencing homelessness for more than one year is closely followed.



Plan of Action

The Housing and Homelessness 10 Year Plan outlines the goals, strategies, and measures we collectively have for our community to ensure homelessness ends and more affordable housing options are created.

The Coalition is focused on seven core goals to address homelessness and housing challenges.

Goal 1: Prevention
Provide more tools to keep Marathon County residents from ending up without a permanent home.

Goal 2: Shelter System
Develop permanent and transitional housing opportunities.

Goal 3: Supportive Services
Provide better access to supportive services that promote long-term stability and expedite movement into permanent housing.

Goal 4: Education, Training, and Employment
Assist individuals to obtain skills and knowledge necessary to successfully participate in the work force.

Goal 5: Community Awareness
Build community awareness by sharing data and information about homelessness in Marathon County.

Goal 6: Coordinated Response
Coordinate responses across systems to eliminate homelessness in Marathon County.

Goal 7: Affordable Housing Planning & Development
Create an adequate supply of emergency and affordable housing.

7 Core Goals

The Coalition is focused on seven core goals to address homelessness and housing instability.

Goal 1: Prevention

Provide Marathon County residents who are experiencing housing challenges with adequate tools to keep them from ending up in unstable housing situations, on the streets, or in emergency shelters.

The most important part of this goal is that people who have been experiencing basic needs and financial distress will be helped by existing resources. The Plan calls for evaluating gaps in service and advocating for additional and new assistance to help people acquire housing and to remain in their homes. Altogether, 116 individuals completed the Housing and Homelessness Coalition shelter survey in April of 2014 and 2015. This survey was distributed to The Women's Community, The Salvation Army, The Community Warming Center, and Randlin Homes where residents at each location voluntarily responded to questions related to their homelessness, family composition, current needs and economic situation. Respondents attributed their being homeless to financial instability, such as being unemployed; inability to pay medical, utility, or housing bills resulting in an eviction; relationship problems and violence, including divorce and domestic violence. The top three most important immediate needs reported were transportation, permanent housing, and health care.

Recommended Action Steps

Maintain crisis prevention resources. Every situation that could result in homelessness is a crisis for the person experiencing it. Crisis resolution responses must include: rapid assessment and triaging, based upon urgency; an instant focus on personal safety as the first priority; de-escalation of the person's emotional reaction; definite action steps the individual can successfully achieve; assistance with actions the individual is temporarily unable or unwilling to attempt; and returning the person to control over their own problem solving.

Maximize community housing resources. Mainstream assistance programs are intended to be the backbone of every community. Creating duplicate services for a sub-population such as people at risk of homelessness allows mainstream agencies to continue to bypass or ineffectively serve people. Duplication also wastes valuable, limited resources that could be spent to keep more households from becoming homeless. There is a need for increased funding to support services provided by programs and agencies like Emergency Assistance, North Central Community Action Program, Catholic Charities, and St. Vincent DePaul.

Goal 2: Shelter System

Support existing transitional and emergency housing options. Make shelter beds and supportive services accessible for all residents both day and night until adequate permanent housing is obtained.

In Marathon County, the shelter system includes homeless shelters and emergency or transitional housing components. These are provided by The Salvation Army, The Community Warming Center at Catholic Charities, The Women's Community, North Central Community Action Program transitional living program, Randlin Homes, and Emergency Assistance at Forward Services. According to the Point-in-Time Count on July 29, 2015, 17 individuals were identified as unsheltered and 87 individuals stayed in local shelters or received emergency lodging assistance. Presently, the need for family rooms exceeds available space. The Salvation Army has one family room that can accommodate at the maximum a family of six. The Women's Community focuses on providing shelter to survivors of domestic violence and their children and has limited occupancy of 40. The housing pilot project has four residential units that would provide four families with housing, along with supportive services, for up to six months. The Plan focuses on expanding and sustaining transitional and emergency shelter options for families as well as case management to help support all shelter residents achieve financial and housing stability.

Recommended Action Steps

Deliver ongoing case management. Support transitional and emergency housing providers to ensure that each individual in the shelter system is assigned an advocate. The advocate's responsibility is to assess an individual's barriers, create a flexible self-sufficiency plan, and provide continual follow up. Advocates should work closely with other service providers to connect the individual to community resources.

Increase supportive service-focused housing assistance. Work with local programs to support and establish additional short-term housing with supportive services leading to a treatment program. There is insufficient temporary emergency housing for families, women, and children. Therefore, there is a need for a new family transitional living facility similar to St. Vincent DePaul's facility in Marshfield, WI. There is also insufficient short-term housing for those under the influence of drugs or alcohol prior to entering treatment. The Community Warming Center is only open November through April and only provides overnight stays. The Salvation Army Transitional Living Center requires sobriety. The Women's Community Safe Shelter houses survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, but the need often exceeds space available.

Support Housing First development. The Coalition will continue to support the housing pilot project. The Coalition will evaluate and explore new Housing First projects that fit community needs. Developing projects based on the Housing First model will increase the chances that individuals will not re-enter the shelter system. A Housing First approach focuses on providing people experiencing homelessness with housing first, followed by services as needed. The primary focus is to help individuals and families obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible.

Goal 3: Supportive Services

Improve access to supportive services that promote long-term financial stability and expedite movement into permanent housing as quickly as possible.

Supportive services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness are necessary to keep them on track towards gaining independence and obtaining and sustaining permanent housing. In 2014, United Way's 2-1-1 received 1,646 requests from Marathon County residents for housing-related assistance. Of the total requests, 14.2% were not met. According to the 2015 Housing and Homelessness Coalition shelter survey, the most important and immediate needs identified by homeless individuals were: help finding permanent housing, transportation, health care, mental health care, emergency shelter or vouchers, and food resources. People who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless find it difficult to navigate the fragmented systems that are in place to help them.

Recommended Action Steps

Provide a community homeless outreach worker. Case management that includes providing supportive services can help an individual meet their needs. A dedicated community homeless outreach worker who works one-on-one with an individual can guide the process of accessing services, help individuals stay on track, and navigate the health and human service delivery systems. Guiding individuals through the process and connecting them to available resources will decrease the chances of a homelessness situation occurring again by better identifying and addressing the specific barriers in each individual case.

Expand mental health and substance abuse services. Expand and support a system that not only performs a health assessment but also involves staff in assisting the individual in finding mental health and substance abuse services. The system should allow for follow-up services during treatment to ensure that individuals are making progress towards achieving self-sufficiency.

Foster financial stability. Connect unemployed and underemployed individuals who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with the Job Center and other resources that can help them improve their interviewing and soft skills to obtain full-time employment. Individuals with an income can be supported by assisting them with finding affordable housing that fits within their budget. Affordable child care assistance is also needed for families to ensure that working parents have the supports needed to keep employment.

Goal 4: Education, Training, and Employment

Improve income security for people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Provide assistance with accessing resources and obtaining necessary skills to be successful in the work force.

Some of the conditions of poverty include: fluctuating work hours, earnings are not enough to cover basic expenses, and no health insurance offered by employer or health insurance is unaffordable.¹ In Marathon County, the unemployment rate was 6.7 in 2013 and 5.1 in 2014, which is 0.1 and 0.4 lower than Wisconsin's unemployment rate, respectively. While the County's unemployment rate fell between 2013 and 2014, there was an increase in the number of individuals who earned poverty wages. The nationally estimated poverty wage was \$8.27 per hour in 2013 and \$8.42 per hour in 2014. In 2013, an estimated 5,770 individuals in the Wausau area were in jobs that had an entry level wage of \$8.27 per hour or less. In 2014, an estimated 8,590 individuals were in jobs that had an entry level wage of \$8.42 per hour or less. For Wausau, in 2013, the hourly wage for 1-parent, 1-child household and 2-parent, 2-child household did not meet the \$17.29 and \$23.56 threshold, respectively. Wisconsin's current minimum wage is \$7.25. In order to keep a family of four out of poverty, a full-time/year-round worker would need to earn at least \$11.36 an hour.² Poverty is one of the causes of housing instability and homelessness.

Coalition members are working on updating a local map of public transit access to jobs that provide a snapshot of the number of job openings accessible by bus. The current map, created in 2014, shows that of the 423 job openings, 248 positions, or 59% of all job openings, were not available by bus.³

Recommended Action Steps

Increase awareness and support coordination of employment and educational resources. Continue to support local programs that provide financial literacy programs, and research programs that have effectively helped people get out of chronic poverty and become self-sufficient. Inform and connect people experiencing housing challenges to existing resources, like the Job Center, that can assist individuals with job-related activities, career counseling services, and obtaining a GED or other educational opportunities. Increase communication among providers to allow for seamless delivery of services and referrals to financial and basic needs programs in the community.

Improve and expand transportation services. Engage local private and public transportation providers and employers to improve and expand transportation services allowing for greater access to employment opportunities and supportive services. The Coalition will put together a snapshot that illustrates how many job openings are inaccessible by public transit. Improving public and private transportation to include expansion of hours of

¹ Cocina, Matias, Laura Dresser and Jody Knauss. *Raise the Floor Wisconsin – Minimum Wage Edition*. <http://www.cows.org> (2014).

² Ibid.

³ See Appendix A: Public Transit Access to Jobs.

operation, shared ride services, shuttle services, or alternative forms of transportation, will allow individuals and families to have greater mobility.

Support a living wage. The Coalition will work with the business community to support efforts to expand economic opportunities for all residents. A living wage, as opposed to the federal poverty line, takes into account the many necessary factors in calculating the actual costs in a specific geographic area. A living wage is a decent wage. It affords the earner and his or her family the most basic costs of living without need for government support or poverty programs. With a living wage, an individual can take pride in his or her work and enjoy the decency of a life beyond poverty. The seven factors in calculating the basic cost of a safe and decent standard of living are: housing, food, child care, transportation, health care, taxes, and other basic necessities. Wages have not been keeping pace with living costs, leaving people with inadequate earnings to support their basic needs.

Goal 5: Community Awareness

Build community awareness and increase the visibility of housing challenges by sharing data and information about homelessness in Marathon County.

To increase awareness and visibility of housing challenges in our community, the Housing and Homelessness Coalition United Way lead staff and the Advocacy and Awareness Subcommittee will carry out a public outreach campaign that expands the reach to all of Marathon County to inform residents of housing and homelessness issues.

Recommended Action Steps

Develop and implement community outreach strategy. Create a public outreach campaign, which includes a PowerPoint and materials that can be used by Coalition members or community members interested in sharing information about affordable housing and homelessness in Marathon County.

Organize and support community events. Organize shelter tours and events that engage the community in issues and concerns related to affordable housing and homelessness. Support events that offer a platform to share information about homelessness like United Way's Community Fest.

Goal 6: Coordinated Response

Coordinate responses to homelessness and housing challenges across systems.

The Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) is in the process of determining and establishing policies on coordinated assessment that would apply to all 69 counties in the CoC. As a member of the CoC, Marathon County may be faced with the challenge of setting procedures that are both in compliance with CoC policies and relevant to the needs of Marathon County housing providers and residents.

Recommended Action Steps

Develop and utilize coordinated assessment and housing resources. The Balance of State Continuum of Care is currently reviewing coordinated assessment tools such as the VI-SPDAT: Vulnerability Index and Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool. VI-SPDAT is a researched-based, quantifiable tool that will assist providers in consistently evaluating the level of need of individuals and families experiencing homelessness and those who are at imminent risk of homelessness. The assessment takes about 10 minutes and can be completed in person or over the phone using VI Service Point or using paper intake form. After an assessment, an individual would be referred to the most relevant community services based on their score and the community roadmap of homeless services.

Goal 7: Affordable Housing Planning and Development

Partner with zoning, planning, and economic development entities in Marathon County to facilitate sharing information, enhance effective development of resources, and create an adequate supply of emergency and affordable housing.

There is a shortage of affordable housing in Marathon County. Over the last five years, rent has risen while the number of renters who need affordable, moderately priced apartments has also increased. This combination of pressures makes it very difficult, often insurmountable, to find and maintain housing. According to the Urban Institute, in 2012, for every 100 extremely low-income (ELI) renter households, there are only 15 affordable and available rental units. In Marathon County, households of four earning less than \$20,750 are considered ELI.⁴ Understanding how many available housing units exist in our community allows the Coalition to determine the gaps and understand the barriers to housing. By connecting with Marathon County Health Department, as well as the landlords of extremely low income (ELI) available, affordable rental properties, we can catalog and understand how many available and affordable units are in Marathon County.

Recommended Action Steps

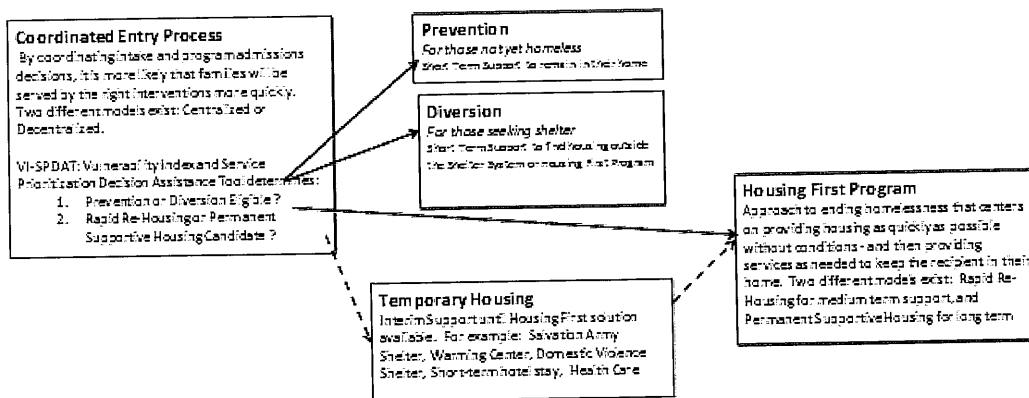
Support affordable housing development. Continue to build relationships with elected county and city officials, zoning, planning, and economic development entities in order to better share information and support the development of affordable housing solutions. Encourage the creation of adequate, affordable housing and homeless services. Support the development of integrated low-income residential housing that does not create geographical segregation.

⁴ Urban Institute. www.urban.org/mapping-americas-rental-housing-crisis.

Marathon County Housing Resources Roadmap

As a Coalition, we researched and developed a process Roadmap that, when fully implemented, can address homelessness in a person-to-person fashion through the collaborative efforts of the Marathon County basic needs providers. The Roadmap can be broken down into the following categories:

1. **Coordinated Entry Process**
By coordinating intake and program decisions, it is more likely that families will be served by the right interventions more quickly. Either centralized or decentralized models for intake can be utilized.
2. **Prevention**
Short-term support for *those not yet homeless* to remain in their homes.
3. **Diversion**
Short-term support for *those seeking shelter* to find housing outside the Shelter System or Housing First Program.
4. **Shelter**
Interim housing support until Housing First solution becomes available.
5. **Housing First Model**
Approach to ending homelessness that centers on providing housing as quickly as possible without conditions, and then helping the individual remain in housing through a network of additional community support.



Using the Roadmap as our desired future state, we identified the services currently available in Marathon County through our basic needs provider network. This enabled us to then identify gaps in available services to prevent homelessness, or provide affordable housing to those experiencing homelessness.

As the Roadmap is implemented, with the help of the broader community, the Coalition's goal is to identify, prioritize, recruit, and coordinate additional human and financial resources to eliminate the gaps in order to assure that safe, stable, and affordable housing is available to those threatened with homelessness. Gaps identified in the Roadmapping exercise, along with potential solutions, are described in more detail in the Core Goals being pursued by the Coalition.

Collective Impact Approach to Ending Homelessness in Marathon County

The Housing and Homelessness Coalition will take a collective impact approach to our work of ending homelessness in Marathon County. Communities that are successfully ending large-scale, long-term, systemic challenges such as homelessness have adopted a model for community change known as collective impact.⁵ The five strategies of collective impact act as the vehicle to achieve systemic community change. These strategies are: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations. The results prove that it is possible to end homelessness, improve access to safe, affordable housing, and that the power of communities coming together around a common priority is what makes an incredibly complex goal of ending and eradicating homelessness possible. This 10 year plan is an imperative first step to creating goals and building a common approach toward ending homelessness.

Indicators of Success

Project planning and monitoring will be completed by the Housing and Homelessness Coalition Leadership sub-committee and United Way of Marathon County Coalition lead staff. By coinciding coalition's efforts with both the Balance of State Continuum of Care's broader plan to end homelessness and the campaign may be an asset to adhering to a timeline and maintaining a data-driven focus.

Measurement

The Plan goals will be measured through defined indicators and benchmark achievements. Applying a timeline and data reporting process will provide a context for projects to move forward in each strategic goal area.

Timeline

The Housing and Homelessness Plan's timeline will focus on annual, two-, five- and ten-year benchmarks with the end goal being the eradication of homelessness by 2025. The goals cannot be achieved without the collective contributions of all members across sectors in Marathon County.

Summary

A community's greatness can be summed up only by how well it cares for all of its people, not just those with the means to help themselves. To eradicate homelessness, we must adopt this collective impact approach to empower all members and sectors of our community to find solutions.

The time has come to engage our community in eradicating homelessness. The Housing and Homelessness Coalition has spent over a year on this plan, and they are ready to continue to work across sectors to increase safe and affordable housing availability and reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Marathon County.

The Coalition believes in these goals and the work of the Plan. The next 10 years will test our will, our perseverance, and our commitment to change, and it will define our County and its residents.

⁵ Kania, John and Mark Kramer. "Collective Impact." Winter 2011. www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact.

Background and Significance

National

According to United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), President Obama's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget request reflects a core tenet of *Opening Doors* that to end homelessness, we must invest in what works: evidence-based solutions like a Housing First approach, permanent supportive housing, and rapid re-housing. *Opening Doors* calls for the strategic targeting of resources and effective implementation focused on outcomes. The budget request was constructed through a careful analysis of the specific number of housing units needed to achieve an end to Veterans homelessness in 2015, chronic homelessness in 2017, and to achieve an end to family homelessness in 2020, taking into account policy actions by Federal agencies to ensure that existing resources are being deployed as efficiently as possible.⁶

The President's budget request includes the resources needed to reach the goal of ending homelessness among Veterans in 2015. The tremendous progress made on ending homelessness among Veterans demonstrates what is possible when resource investments are made in evidence-based solutions like permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and a Housing First approach, and when government works in partnership with communities to target and use these resources effectively and efficiently. The President's FY 2016 Budget Proposal is the fourth budget developed by USICH member agencies since the launch of *Opening Doors* and includes historic investments, such as unwavering commitment to ending homelessness among Veterans and their families in 2015. The Budget contains \$1.5 billion for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs that prevent or end homelessness.

State

According to the 2014 State of Homelessness in America report, poor households that doubled-up on housing in Wisconsin increased by 6.9%.⁷ The Wisconsin Point-in-Time counts conducted in 2013 reported the following statistics of households and individuals experiencing homelessness in the State of Wisconsin and the Balance of State, which includes Marathon County and 68 other counties:⁸

	January 2013		July 2013	
	Wisconsin	Balance of State	Wisconsin	Balance of State
Total Households	3,841	2,214	3,493	1,978
Total Persons	6,074	3,610	5,683	3,543

⁶ Fiscal Year 2015: Budget of the U.S. Government. www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2016/assets/budget.pdf; United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, June 2015. http://usich.gov/opening_doors/

⁷ National Alliance to End Homelessness. www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/the-state-of-homelessness-2014.

⁸ Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care. Point in Time Final Numbers, January and July 2013 reports. www.wiboscoc.org/point-in-time.html.

The Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care (WIBOSCOC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization serving all the counties in Wisconsin, except Dane, Milwaukee, and Racine. The purpose of the Corporation is to:

1. Provide leadership to local continua in the Balance of State geographic area;
2. Ensure the efficient and effective delivery of housing and supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness;
3. Promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness;
4. Provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, States, and local governments to re-house individuals and families experiencing homelessness rapidly while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to individuals and families experiencing homelessness, as well as to communities as a consequence of homelessness;
5. Promote access to and effective use of mainstream programs by individuals and families experiencing homelessness;
6. Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness;
7. Meet the educational needs of Corporation's members and the public;
8. Advocate for those it serves; and
9. Collect dues from its members, as authorized herein.⁹

The BOSCOCC covers 69 of Wisconsin's 72 counties and extends from the shores of Lake Superior in the northwest to portions of the Chicago metro area in the southeast. The population for the continuum is 3.8 million, and it covers an area of 52,533 square miles. The BOSCOCC has met regularly since its inception at various locations around the state and brings together people from a wide geographic area that includes urban, suburban, and rural areas. All members share a common purpose, which is to provide quality homeless services in an effort to end homelessness.

Because of the diversity and size of the BOSCOCC, localized continua of care that reflect particular communities or geographic areas meet regularly, and representatives from these groups make up the BOSCOCC. These different, smaller groups represent areas that have very different service arrays for homeless people and needs unique to their area. In Marathon County, the Housing and Homelessness Coalition serves as the local continuum with North Central Community Action Program (NCCAP) as the lead agency. NCCAP also works with local groups in Lincoln County and Wood County as part of the BOSCOCC.

Bringing together the local continua of care at quarterly meetings is a key activity for the BOSCOCC. The quarterly meetings hosted by the BOSCOCC provide training opportunities and

⁹ Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care. www.wiboscoc.org/.

technical assistance for homeless service providers belonging to local continua of care. Additionally, the BOSCOCC collects and analyzes data from the member agencies for submission to HUD and prepares the annual HUD CoC grant application for the membership.

Advocacy for homeless issues is encouraged by the BOSCOCC through education on current legislation, contact with legislators, and support for the Wisconsin Coalition to End Homelessness, Inc. The BOSCOCC has provided funds and may decide to continue to provide funds to the Wisconsin Coalition to End Homelessness. Any funding from the BOSCOCC to the WCEH will be from non-federal, discretionary funds.

Currently, the BOSCOCC is operated directly through the volunteer board of directors. In the future, dependent on fund availability, the BOSCOCC may hire staff for daily operations. Also, the BOSCOCC may decide to directly grant funds to members, in which case, Request for Proposal guidelines would be instituted to ensure a fair process.¹⁰

Local

In Marathon County the requests for basic needs assistance continue to rise as community and state resources diminish, challenging the county's ability to serve all persons in need. In 2014, 21% (234 of 1,111) of all unmet needs reported by United Way's 2-1-1 were specific requests for housing assistance that could not be met. According to the LIFE Report published in January 2014, the number of individuals seeking shelter due to homelessness increased by approximately 4,000 requests between 2011 and 2012. The existing shelters – The Salvation Army, The Women's Community, and The Community Warming Center – housed 539 people in 2013 and 681 in 2014. For emergency lodging vouchers, 333 households were placed in emergency lodging in 2013 and 112 households in 2014.¹¹

In January 2013, Catholic Charities opened the Wausau Community Warming Center. Developing a place for people to stay safe from cold weather elements during Marathon County's harsh winter months was identified as a priority for United Way's Housing and Homelessness Coalition. The need for a warming center was so great that within four months of creating the Coalition, the Community Warming Center was in operation. In year 2, the Community Warming Center increased its service delivery capability by 30%, adding 10 additional reclining chairs to house 25 individuals a night. The center is open from November 1 - April 30. From May to October, the center is closed; however, there has been a consistent demand for services during the daytime hours that the center's non-profit agency office is open; numerous walk-ins come inquiring for services.

In 2013 there were 511 evictions filed in Marathon County. The cost to individuals and families is compounded when eviction becomes reality. There is no easy way to tell how many court-filed evictions actually ended in evictions, but the Coalition realizes that maintaining housing is more cost-effective than eviction.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Emergency lodging data may vary between 2013 and 2014 due in part to changes to United Way's measurement framework starting in 2014. In addition, changes were made to the program in 2014 with the housing pilot project which impacted emergency lodging numbers.

Our Community's Needs

Shelter data collected by the Housing and Homelessness Coalition in April 2014 and 2015 identify needs of people who were homeless.

Figure 1. Needs of Shelter Residents Experiencing Homelessness (Housing & Homelessness Coalition shelter survey: 2014 - N=70; 2015 - N=46)

Services Needed	# of Reported Needs		% of Population	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
Transportation	33	20	47%	43%
Help Finding Permanent Housing	28	21	40%	46%
Health Care	18	11	26%	24%
Education	14	4	20%	9%
Emergency Shelter or Voucher	14	6	20%	13%
Help applying for public benefits	11	3	16%	7%
Food Pantry/Community Meal Sites	10	6	14%	13%
Mental Health Care	9	10	13%	22%
Help getting a valid WI ID	8	3	11%	7%
Legal Services	8	5	11%	11%
Emergency Assistance-Job Center	7	4	14%	9%
Job Service Center	5	5	7%	11%
Treatment for Substance Abuse	5	4	7%	9%
Veteran's Services/Benefits	5	1	7%	2%
Child Care	3	3	4%	7%
Other	3	1	4%	2%
None	5	4	7%	9%
Left Blank	n/a	6	n/a	13%

Point-In-Time Data

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that communities throughout the country conduct a count of individuals experiencing homelessness bi-annually on the last Wednesday of January and the last Wednesday of July. The count includes people who are unsheltered living on the streets and those staying in homeless shelters. Data gathered helps provide a snapshot of homelessness in Marathon County and nationwide. Data is used to evaluate housing and homeless assistance and legislation. In 2015, 192 people stayed in a homeless shelter or received emergency lodging assistance and 23 people were counted as unsheltered in Marathon County.

Homelessness in Marathon County Schools

There are an estimated 240 children who were or had experienced homelessness during the 2013-2014 school year in 3 of 11 school districts in Marathon County. This number is most likely non-duplicative in regard to the 198 individuals experiencing homelessness who were counted during the Point-In-Time Count in 2014. With our community's focus on investing in children as a priority, it is imperative to connect children and families to housing solutions as immediately as possible. Efforts to connect and outreach to the school districts in Marathon County will continue.

Marathon County Housing Information: Data Highlights

- The Wausau Community Development Authority administers the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program for the metropolitan Wausau area. Although they are authorized to issue up to 435 vouchers, the average rental assistance per voucher has increased such that the roughly \$75,000 of monthly funding from HUD meets the needs of only 250 vouchers. The waiting list for the HCV program reopened to accept new applications for a 2-week period beginning on August 10, 2015. All applications were added to the waiting list using a lottery system.
- The Emergency Housing Assistance Fund (EHAF), a grant provided by United Way of Marathon County to provide stop-gap shelter needs, provided 453 households with rent assistance in 2013 and 349 households in 2014.

Availability and Scarcity of Affordable Housing

There is an affordable housing shortage in our community. Over the last five years, rent has risen while the number of renters who need affordable housing has also increased. This combination of pressures makes it very difficult, often insurmountable, to find and maintain housing. Over one quarter of all Marathon County residents were occupied by renters as of 2011. Affordable housing rates are defined as no more than 30% of one's income. In Marathon County, oftentimes, housing costs are the largest budgetary concern for many households. Housing needs are further exacerbated by a number of factors including monthly income, previous housing experiences, transportation, housing availability, and financial literacy.¹² A closer look at understanding a number of factors will be outlined below in an effort to unravel a complex mix of variables contributing to housing needs in Marathon County.

The scarcity of available, affordable housing makes finding and maintaining housing in Marathon County very difficult. In the U.S., for every 100 extremely low-income (ELI) renter households, there are 29 available, affordable housing units, a shortage of 71 units. In Marathon County, for every 100 ELI households, there are only 15 affordable and available rental units. In Marathon County there are 4,197 ELI renter households with 644 available, affordable rental units.¹³ There are 1,968 rental units that have connected with the Marathon County Health Department. This may not be an exhaustive list; however, we know it is a start to cataloging and understanding how many units exist in Marathon County. The landlords connected to each property may also have the ability to share available units and update this information regularly to ensure we are able to connect people to housing efficiently and effectively.

The following data outlines what we know about housing in Marathon County:

- The total number of housing units in Marathon County in 2013: 57,909. Of those, 53,079 were occupied housing units.

¹² The LIFE Report of Marathon County: 2013-2015, 2014.

¹³ Urban Institute. www.urban.org/housingaffordability/

- The total number of renter-occupied housing units: 13,792
 - 1-person household: 44%
 - 2-person household: 26.8%
 - 3-person household: 13.6%
 - 4-person household or more: 15.7%
- The total number of owner-occupied housing units: 39,287
 - 1-person household: 19.5%
 - 2-person household: 42.1%
 - 3-person household: 15.4%
 - 4-person household or more: 22.9%
- The total number of vacant housing units: 4,830
- The homeowner vacancy rate: 2.2%
- The rental vacancy rate: 6.2%
- Total housing units in multi-unit structures: 11,167
- Housing units identified as mobile home, boat, RV, van, and other seasonal, recreational, or occasional use: 1,991.¹⁴

Understanding how many available housing units exist in our community allows the Housing and Homelessness Coalition to determine the gaps and understand the barriers to housing.

¹⁴ United States Census Bureau. <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

Glossary

Chronic Homelessness

A person who is chronically homeless is someone who has experienced homelessness for a year or longer, or who has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years and has a disability. A family with an adult member who meets this description would also be considered chronically homeless.

Extremely Low-Income (ELI)

An extremely low-income renter household, or ELI, is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as having earnings of 30 percent or less of area median income. This measure can aid communities at better understanding basic needs challenges like housing.

Homelessness

In January 2012, changes to the definition of homelessness were amended by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) after a final regulation to implement changes was issued regarding the definition of homelessness based on the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing, or HEARTH Act.¹⁵ Below are the definitions organized by four categories of homelessness:

- An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
 - An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, camping ground;
 - An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low income individuals); or
 - An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resides for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;

¹⁵ National Alliance to End Homelessness. www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/changes-in-the-hud-definition-of-homeless

- An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
 - The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - No subsequent residence has been identified; and
 - The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing;

- Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:
 - Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C.2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)), or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a);
 - Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;
 - Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and
 - Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect), the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment;

- Any individual or family who:
 - Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-

threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence;

- Has no other residence; and
- Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, and faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.

Housing First

An approach to ending homelessness that focuses on housing an individual who is experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible, then provide services as needed.

United Way's 2-1-1

2-1-1 is a national 3-digit dialing code for free and confidential access to non-emergency health and human services information and referral. United Way's 2-1-1 connects people who need help to existing community services, and is a core program of United Way of Marathon County serving Marathon, Portage, Lincoln, Oneida, and Vilas counties.

Appendix A: Public Transit Access to Jobs

This map, created in 2014, provides a one-week snapshot of public transit access to jobs. The white pins indicate the number of available jobs not accessible by bus or during non-operating hours. Of the 423 job openings, 248 positions were inaccessible by bus.

