

# *Department of Administration*

## *Bureau of Housing*

### *November 2023 Updates*

#### **WERA (Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance) Program**

WERA is being administered by Energy Services, Inc. (ESI) with a dedicated hotline and email to answer questions. WERA application processing restarted on September 1, 2023 with limited funds.

#### **WERA REPORT as of November 1, 2023**

Total Rent Assistance (WERA) distributed: **\$263,163,063**. This covers 68 Wisconsin counties excluding Brown, Dane, Milwaukee and Waukesha.

Total Households: **65,535**

Total Persons: **160,966** (There is some duplication of households and persons as some have drawn funds from WERA 1 and WERA 2)

Total Spending per household (HH) is approximately **\$4,016**.

**64.02%** HH are 0 to ≤ 30% AMI; **22.10%** HH are > 30% and ≤ 50% AMI; **13.55%** HH > 50% and ≤ 80% AMI.

#### **Wisconsin Eviction Data Project**

<https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/Wisconsin-Eviction-Data-Project.aspx>

The Wisconsin Eviction Data Project is produced by the [Interagency Council on Homelessness](#) to track, on a monthly basis, the number of eviction filings and judgements for eviction in all 72 counties in the state to track the state's housing economy, the efficacy of homelessness prevention programs, and to inform the public on housing policy needs throughout Wisconsin.

#### **HOME ARP Program**

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 appropriated \$5 billion to provide housing, services, and shelter to individuals experiencing homeless and other vulnerable populations, to be allocated by formula to jurisdictions that qualified for HOME Investment Partnerships Program allocations in Fiscal Year 2021. DEHCR received \$41,859,563 in funding. The program is still in development. The State of Wisconsin's substantial amendment to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan was accepted by HUD in October of this year. This amendment results in the removal of the HOME-ARP Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Activity and reallocation of funding to the Nonprofit Operating and Capacity Building Activities, whose allocation is now \$175,000 each. Additionally, the amended plan allows for applying organizations to establish preferences for specific Qualifying Populations and enable the use of the Expanded Coordinated Entry (ECE) referral method.

### **CARES ESG-CV Funds**

The State of Wisconsin was awarded two Emergency Solutions Grants-Coronavirus (ESG-CV) totaling \$32,484,591. Round 1 included \$12,723,269 and round 2 totaled \$19,761,322. These ESG-CV funds are to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) among individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance; and to support additional homeless assistance and homelessness prevention activities to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. ESG-CV funds the following activities: Rapid Re-Housing, Homelessness Prevention, Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, and HMIS.

DEHCR received an additional \$173,646.87 in ESG-CV funding from HUD due to a federal reallocation that took place late August 2022. Those funds, along with unspent funds from the original allocations, were awarded in December 2022 through a competitive application process (a total of about \$1.5 million). Eight agencies received awards (3 emergency shelter renovation projects, one emergency shelter operations project, one motel voucher project, one street outreach project, one HMIS-support agency, and one non-HMIS support agency). All funds must be expended by September 30, 2023.

All ESG-CV contracts with grantees have ended as of 9/30/23. DEHCR expects that 100% of grantee funding has been expended. Final confirmation will be received by the end of November 2023, when final payment requests are due. DEHCR has a small amount of administrative funding remaining to close-out the grant, which must be spent by June 30, 2024.

### **State Shelter Subsidy Grant – Homeless Case Management Services (SSSG HCMS)**

On September 28, 2022, Governor Tony Evers announced \$2.7 million in new, targeted grants to ensure support and services are available for families and individuals who need them. These new grants were funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to provide critical resources to domestic violence programs and emergency and homeless shelter services throughout the state of Wisconsin.

Of the \$2.7 million available, \$500,000 was allocated to the State Shelter Subsidy Grant (SSSG) program. These funds will be used to provide homeless case management services (HCMS) to families and individuals who currently reside in emergency shelter facilities or motel voucher programs.

- For 2023, 10 agencies received SSSG HCMS awards totaling \$500,000.
- As of the end of August, SSSG HCMS expenditures were approximately \$288,900 which is 57.8% of the total program budget.

## **BUREAU OF HOUSING UPDATES**

### **HOME Homebuyer and Rehabilitation (HHR)**

Provides direct assistance for acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction. Funds are awarded through a biennial funding cycle.

- 2023 HHR contracts started 7/1/23 and go through December 2024.
- 2024 HHR contracts (for current grantees) will begin 7/1/24 and go to December 2025.

### **Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI)**

State funds set aside to assist with acquisition and foreclosure prevention. These funds are awarded on a biennial competition basis.

- DEHCR awarded \$2.6 million in HCRI funds for the 2023-2025 biennium with contracts in July 2023. Performance period for HCRI contracts run from July 1, 2023 to September 30, 2025.

### **HOME Rental Housing Development (RHD)**

Rental Housing Development (RHD) Program is designed to assist affordable housing development opportunities for persons at or below 60% County Median Income (CMI).

- Applications are accepted via website. General application round opens June 2024.
- Rental activities all require targeting Section 3 workers in projects awarded HOME funds over \$200,000.

### **Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)/Housing Assistance Program (HAP)/Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) (EHH)**

The ESG federal funds are to assist with rapid re-housing, homelessness prevention, emergency shelter and street outreach. The Housing Assistance Program is a state program to assist for housing, support services and administrative costs to facilitate the movement of homeless individuals and families to independent living. Homeless Prevention Program is a state program used for rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention.

Contracts for the 2023-2024 grant cycle were executed in September 2023. Twenty-five grantees across the state received a total of \$5,751,107 in funding (\$3,311,975 ESG / \$1,539,132 HPP / \$900,000 HAP). The performance period is October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024.

### **Homeless Case Management Services Grant (HCMS)**

This program supports intensive case management for families living in shelters and motels, through motel voucher programs. The case management provided focuses on financial management, employment, ensuring school continuation for children, and enrolling unemployed or underemployed parents in W-2 or Food Share Employment and Training.

- 10 grantees were awarded \$50,000 each for the 2023-24 grant cycle (July 2023 through June 2024).

- Applications for the 2024-2025 cycle will likely open in March 2024. Timing is subject to change.

### **Employment Grant (EG)**

This grant provides one \$75,000 award each year to a municipality (county, city, village, or town), or a federally recognized tribal governing body. Funds can be used to provide programming connecting people experiencing homelessness to permanent employment. Eligible costs include participants' wages/stipends, as well as operational and administrative expenses. Preference is given to applicants who will partner with an agency to provide supportive services to participants.

- The 2023 grant was awarded to the City of Madison.
- Applications for the 2024 cycle closed October 20, 2023. The award decision will be forthcoming.

### **Recovery Voucher Grant Program (RV)**

This program provides an option for individuals (and their families) experiencing homelessness who have also been diagnosed with an opioid use disorder (OUD) or who have been receiving treatment for OUD within the past 12-months to be housed in Department of Health Services' recognized recovery residences.

- In 2023, 7 grantees received awards totaling \$609,800.
- Applications for the 2024 cycle closed October 27, 2023, and are being scored.

### **Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)**

The TBRA program provides security deposits and rental assistance, up to 24 months, to individuals and families at or below 60% County Median Income (CMI) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

- DEHCR approved 13 TBRA grantee awards for the 2022-2024 application period, totaling \$4.7 million.
- DEHCR approved 14 TBRA grantee awards for the 2023-2025 application period, totaling \$6.4 million.

***Public Housing Authorities are encouraged to partner with their local TBRA grant recipient to assist with gap payments while clients are waiting to receive housing choice vouchers.***

### **State Shelter Subsidy Grant (SSSG)**

The SSSG program assists individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness by awarding state grants to eligible agencies that provide emergency shelter and supportive services. SSSG funding is awarded based on shelter nights, eligibility requirements, and minimum and maximum amounts set by state statutes and administrative code. Funding can be utilized for most shelter operation costs such as salaries and utilities.

- For 2023, 49 agencies received awards totaling \$1,647,400.

### **Critical Assistance (CA)**

The Critical Assistance (CA) program provides homeless prevention assistance to individuals and families who are at or below 60% County Median Income (CMI), at risk of homelessness and who reside in areas that other homeless prevention resources are exhausted or not available. CA funds can provide a one-time only payment towards the following items: security deposits, rental payments, mortgage payments, utility payments and tax arrearages.

- For the 2023-2024 grant period, Foundation for Rural Housing received \$282,800 in CA funding to provide homeless prevention services in the Wisconsin Balance of State areas.
- OUT OF MONEY until July 1, 2024

### **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)**

The state of Wisconsin receives HOPWA funding based on a formula developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) federal HOPWA program. The HOPWA program provides housing assistance and supportive services to low-income persons and their families living with HIV/AIDS. HOPWA funds can be utilized for housing assistance activities such as tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA), permanent facility-based housing (P-FBH), or short-term rent, mortgage, and utility (STRMU) assistance. HOPWA funds may also be used for supportive services and housing information services either in conjunction to or separately from housing assistance.

- For the 2022-2023 grant period, Vivent Health was awarded \$934,593 in HOPWA renewal funding. Vivent Health expects to provide STRMU assistance to 134 HIV/AIDS client households; TBRA to 21 HIV/AIDS client households; housing information services to 134 HIV/AIDS client households and supportive services to 157 persons with HIV/AIDS.
- The 2023-2024 HOPWA application period closed on Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Fair Housing Contract**

DEHCR contracts with an outside agency to provide fair housing assistance and information statewide. To be an eligible Fair Housing applicant, the contractor must meet the following mandatory qualifications: experience in fair housing complaint investigations and follow-up; experience in fair housing training and outreach; a toll-free telephone number; in-person office location(s) and a website to assist individuals who believe they have experienced illegal housing discrimination.

Fair Housing services include providing fair housing information statewide; counseling Wisconsin residents on fair housing law; making fair housing complaint intake and investigation available to persons who believe they have experienced discrimination; and conducting fair housing testing. By offering these services, the Division meets various state and federal fair housing requirements.

- For 2023-2024 contract period, Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council was awarded \$62,150 in Fair Housing renewal funding to provide these services statewide under the terms of the 2022 request for purchasing authority process.

For more information of the Department of Administration programs, visit the website at <https://energyandhousing.wi.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>.