



# Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

## A Hand and a Home: Foundations for Success

### 2019-2022 Statewide Action Plan

#### Executive Summary: November 27, 2018

### Background

The Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) was created by 2017 Act 74, which received unanimous support in both the Assembly and the Senate. The Council contains the secretaries or directors of eight state agencies and representatives from the four Continuum of Care (COC) organizations in Wisconsin. It is chaired by Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch. Exactly one year to the day since Act 74 was signed into law, the ICH is releasing Wisconsin's first statewide plan to prevent and end homelessness. It comes on the heels of months of travels, discussions, meetings, and feedback from state officials, homeless service providers, advocates, and state employees. The plan's release provides a roadmap for future funding initiatives, legislation, and collaborative efforts. It builds out from vision to principles to themes to recommendations. Some performance measures are identified. Future ICH meetings will provide additional timelines and responsibilities amongst the member agencies.

### Funding Priorities

The plan specifically calls for \$3.75 million in new state spending annually. This would more than double the state's current investment in direct housing assistance for homeless individuals. The new money would both supplement some existing state programs and create new ones aligned with best practices. They are spread out along the spectrum of homeless services, as the plan identifies that "too much attention paid to any singular aspect of the continuum at the expense of others weakens the system as a whole." Some of the new funding requests include:

- \$500,000 annually for the Homeless Prevention Program (HPP)
- \$300,000 annually to begin a state Diversion program within HPP
- \$500,000 annually to the State Shelter Subsidy Grant – an increase of nearly 50%, the first substantial change in over 25 years
- \$500,000 to encourage new affordable housing stock
- \$900,000 to expand the Housing Assistance Program – an increase of 300%

### Case Management

The ICH's plan is entitled "A Hand and a Home." Providing person-to-person assistance, for many, is just as important as providing shelter. The plan calls for additional case management at shelters and housing sites, and reaffirms the state's commitment to pursuing an 1115 Medicaid Waiver to allow for billing of Medicaid for supportive services related to housing. It also seeks to expand the professional development of case managers. Finally, it links case management to more aspects of the care continuum: to those who received prevention assistance to those who are exiting state corrections facilities with nowhere else to go.

### Collaboration and Silo Breaking

Another pillar of the state's plan is to build better partnerships among state agencies and housing providers alike. The plan calls for data sharing between schools that operate under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition and the COCs that operate under the definition provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It also calls for an examination of state programming to determine whether they are being deployed locally to fully assist those experiencing homelessness. The plan further calls for a model policy for communities around the state to adopt to build a better local homeless response system.

### Next Steps

The plan is set for the years 2019-2022. The legislature will have to adopt many of the policy recommendations, and further meetings of the council will need to establish a rubric wherein each appropriate agency determines accountability and timeline for associated strategies. Furthermore, the plan outlines challenges outside the scope of the ICH to address in this current plan, such as transportation, childcare, domestic violence, and social mobility. *A Hand and A Home* states "[ending] homelessness will take a sustained, multi-faceted approach. By writing this plan, the Council, state government, and Wisconsin as a whole is beginning a long endeavor."

Theme 1: Focus on the Continuum

Theme 2: Case Management Makes the Difference

Theme 3: Housing and Work

Theme 4: Housing Access & Affordability

Theme 5: Silo Breaking

Theme 6: A Community Response

