



Wisconsin Balance of State Newsletter - Second October Edition

Advocacy Highlight: Community Education

Part of advocating for adequate solutions to homelessness is educating community members and leaders. Find out more about how below.

Figuring out who to talk to

Targeted individual conversations with the right leadership can go a long way. Figure out who your local leaders are: city council representatives, school board members, alderpersons, etc. If they don't have someone to inform them about homelessness in their community, you could be that person!

Larger community conversations can be an opportunity to reach a broader audience. Consider hosting a community forum or event where people can learn about

homelessness and services in their area. Please inform your Balance of State staff representative, we are happy to support you in these spaces.

Some communities have already hosted these types of events:

- In Waukesha, Family Promise of Waukesha County hosted a forum with law enforcement, leadership, and service providers to discuss collaboration and concern for this issue.
- Winnebago County Service providers, facilitated by ADVOCAP, hosted an event called The Face of Homelessness, which brought together data presentations and stories to start a community-based conversation. See the highlight [here](#).

News outlets and letters to the editor are another way to reach a broad audience. For instance, leadership in Appleton spoke with Fox11 News about criminalization following the Grants Pass decision this summer. Mayor Woodford responded after being prompted if this ruling is a solution to the issue:

"No. This is not, the ruling is not a solution," says Mayor Woodford. "It might be a tool for some communities, and look -- different communities are dealing with different issues, very different circumstances. But criminalizing homelessness -- punishing people for being down on their luck or having these coinciding issues that lead to them being unhoused -- that doesn't solve the problems, that doesn't address the underlying issues."

Read the full article [here](#).

What to say and structuring your communication

Housing Not Handcuffs wrote about the Value, Problem, Solution, Action Formula, which can help formulate responses and prepare for conversations.

"VPSA: Value, Problem, Solution, Action

One useful approach to tying these lessons together is to structure communications around a Value, Problem, Solution, and Action, meaning that each message contains these four key components:

- *Values: why the audience should care, and how they will connect the issue to themselves*
- *Problem: framed as a threat to the shared values we have just invoked*
- *Solution: to avoid issue fatigue*
- *Action: a concrete ask of the audience to ensure engagement and movement"*

Example:

We all want to live in a community where we are safe and have our needs met (value). When we see people sleeping outside, we don't feel as safe because it is a visual reminder that not everyone in our community has their needs met. Some people have to sleep outside because they have no other option (problem). We know this is a problem in our community, and we have the power to solve it. Providing services and housing is the best way to solve this issue in the long-term (solution). Please join our subcommittee in supporting our grant application for more street outreach services and permanent housing resources (action). With your support, we can bring this needed resource to our community.

View the one pager at the link [here](#).

Being Solution Focused

There are solutions to the homelessness crisis, and only presenting data and information on the issue is not effective. Finishing with purposeful solutions and action steps gives your audience a meaningful to do. It also unites a group towards a common goal.

In these conversations, present alternatives to criminalization measures.

- Outline what resources to call instead of police, including: street outreach, 211, food resources, mental health crisis response
- If you have a law enforcement and homelessness services collaboration in your community, share how people can access it
- Reach out to your Balance of State and HMIS staff for assistance in compiling data
- If people are interested in contributing financially, share where they can go and how their donation will assist

Looking for a place to start on anti-criminalization in your community? Check out our community assessment here!

November is Homelessness Awareness Month

Your local homeless coalition may be hosting events throughout the month! The statewide homelessness awareness month kickoff event is Friday, November 1st in Wausau, WI.



3RD ANNUAL WI
HOMELESSNESS
AWARENESS KICKOFF EVENT

SAVE THE DATE

**November 1, 2024
12 PM CT**



Community Partners Campus
360 Grand Ave, Wausau, WI 54403

Join us for guest speakers, view art work created by individuals with lived experience of homelessness, and our Tree of Date reflecting on our homelessness within WI.

#homelessinwisconsin



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Community Action Highlight: Lakeshore CAP Inc. shared a form letter they used to assist people experiencing homelessness in registering to vote! This was a critical action to advocate for people we work with. See the letter [here!](#)

WIBOS Social

Planning a getaway to Eau Claire, WI? Consider staying at the [Lismore hotel](#). Staff have enjoyed the amenities and clean spaces!



The next Wisconsin Balance of State Quarterly Meeting is Friday, November 15th, at 9am. Sign up [here!](#)



Mark your calendars for the [Wisconsin Balance of State second annual conference](#)

The 2025 theme words are: **INNOVATE** | **ADVOCATE** | **COLLABORATE**
February 18-19, 2025 - Tundra Lodge Green Bay, WI

Do you have content or announcements you would like highlighted in our newsletter? Reach out to erika.olson@wibos.org

