

1 **SUB __ TO 2021 RES. 156 (Proposed Wegleitner 9-13-21 as amended by EANR on 9-30-21)**
2 **PURSUING TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE**
3 **EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS AND AUTHORIZING FUNDING**
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5 **Justification**
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7 **Authorizing Law:** In March of 2021, the federal government authorized the \$1.9 trillion
8 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) authorizing additional funding to respond to and recover
9 from the COVID-19 pandemic across multiple areas of need. Dane County was allocated over
10 \$106 million in ARP local aid. A portion of those funds has been committed to various efforts to
11 prevent and end homelessness and limit spread of COVID-19 through efforts to provide social
12 distancing in the congregate shelter system. Through the ARPA, Dane County has received a
13 \$2.25M allocation of funds targeted to the expansion of housing. Dane County's allocation was
14 determined using the HUD's formula used to allocate annual HOME Investment Partnerships
15 Program funds. While federal guidance for the use of these funds is forthcoming, national
16 webinars regarding best practices for the use of these funds have encouraged the purchase and
17 conversion of hotels for supportive housing for persons who have experienced homelessness.
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19 **Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**
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21 Dane County has prioritized safe sheltering and eviction prevention throughout the COVID-19
22 pandemic. The County committed funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic
23 Security Act ("CARES") Act to eviction prevention and has partnered with Tenant Resource
24 Center and Urban Triage to administer Emergency Rent Assistance program funds allocated to
25 the County through federal COVID relief legislation. The County funded Occupy Madison to
26 support the creation of 28 tinier houses for people who had been living outside in 2020 to
27 prevent them from having to live outside during the cold winter months. The County has also
28 funded expanded housing navigation and launched a rapid rehousing program to provide more
29 stable housing options to people experiencing homelessness. The County has funded a hotel
30 sheltering program for families due to the capacity limitations at the family shelter and for
31 individuals who are especially vulnerable to serious illness if infected by COVID-19 ("vulnerable
32 population") and not sufficiently protected in congregate shelter facilities. At its peak, the hotel
33 sheltering program provided safe shelter to approximately 300 households.
34

35 ***Vulnerable Population Hotel Sheltering***
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37 As local public health emergency orders were lifted in June, 2021, it became more difficult for
38 Dane County to secure long term room availability with local hotels who were partnering in the
39 vulnerable population hotel (VPH) sheltering program. In mid-July, the VPH stopped taking new
40 referrals due to the program ending in August, 2021. Currently, there are 139 people in the
41 hotels designated as VPH and 60 people are on the waitlist. The last two VPH contracts end on
42 August 25 and August 30, 2021. Neither of the VP hotels are interested in extending the
43 contracts. Housing navigation, hotel sheltering case management partners, and supportive
44 housing providers are working to find permanent housing for the people that remain in the

45 county-funded hotel sheltering and are placing some people. The County is also working to
46 secure new hotel partners. The shelter available to single women operated by The Salvation
47 Army is at capacity. Many people sheltered in VPH were previously living outside in
48 encampments at McPike Park and Reindahl Park.

49
50 ~~The County has not yet spent \$2.4M in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds it allocated for~~
51 ~~hotel sheltering in 2021, but will use these funds for quarantine shelter and new VPH contracts if~~
52 ~~secured. The County also has allocated funds in the amount of \$2,659,760 for the Hotels to~~
53 ~~Housing program in 2021 and \$1,624,252 is unspent. While 90 persons in the Hotel to Housing~~
54 ~~program have executed leases and more will lease up in the coming months, estimates show~~
55 ~~there will be unused funding that can be reprogrammed to support additional services and~~
56 ~~housing options for individuals and couples experiencing homelessness.~~

57
58 *Ongoing Need for Supportive Services and Housing for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness*

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60 The Dane County Homeless Services Consortium, our Continuum of Care for U.S. Department
61 of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) homelessness assistance grants maintains a
62 coordinated entry lists (aka “by-name” lists) for housing for all the families and individuals who
63 have been identified through our coordinated entry system as experiencing “literal
64 homelessness” (also known as “category 1”). Persons are placed on this list according to a
65 common assessment tool and the length of time they have experienced homelessness. In order
66 to be assessed and placed on the coordinated entry “by-name” list for housing, the person must
67 have been sleeping in a shelter or another place not meant for human habitation (like an
68 encampment) for at least 7 days in a row prior to their assessment. Persons are experiencing
69 chronic homelessness, according to HUD, if they have a verifiable disabling condition and have
70 experienced homelessness for a total of at least 12 months in the last three years.

71
72 As of ~~September 3, August 11~~, 2021, there are ~~508~~ 616 individuals on the coordinated entry list
73 in Dane County who are currently experiencing homelessness and almost half of those
74 persons, ~~238~~ 290 people, are experiencing chronic homelessness. Racial disparities are
75 significant. Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) make up the majority of the people
76 on the coordinated entry list and ~~224~~ 277 people (45~~3~~) identify as Black. ~~442~~ 177 people are
77 seniors (55 and over), ~~29~~ 43 are veterans, and 43 are youth (18-24 yrs old) on the list. As of
78 August 11, 2021, ~~the~~ average length of time of individuals on the list waiting for a housing
79 placement is 470 days.

80
81 *Thousands in Dane County at Risk of Eviction Due to Rent Owed*

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83 As of July 5, 2021, 8,573 renters (9.2% of 93,189 total renters) in Dane County are at risk of
84 eviction due to owing back rent.¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), on
85 August 3, 2021, issued a new Order which applies in counties with a substantial or high rate of
86 community transmission. This Order is in effect for 60 days and protects renters from being

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/28/opinion/covid-eviction-moratorium.html>

87 evicted due to non-payment of rent through October 3, 2021 so long as Dane County remains at
88 a substantial or high rate of community transmission. When the Order is no longer applicable, a
89 significant increase in eviction filings is expected. More evictions will also add pressure on our
90 sheltering and homeless services system.

91

92 *Growing Number of People Living in Encampments and Cars*

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94 Some of the people who had been in the hotels and who are on the coordinated entry list were
95 previously living in encampments, including but not limited to McPike Park and Reindahl Park in
96 the City of Madison. For much of the pandemic, the City of Madison followed CDC [guidance](#) to
97 leave encampments in place. The City of Madison also authorized temporary permitted
98 encampments in a few locations. One of those temporary permanent encampments (TPE) was
99 at Reindahl Park. While the authorization for the TPE expired, the City of Madison, through
100 direction by the Common Council, is allowing the encampment to remain in place while the City
101 pursues alternatives to the Reindahl site. Outreach staff have estimated that as of early August,
102 2021, they have connected with approximately 125 people who are currently living outside in
103 encampments. The actual number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and living
104 outside or in cars is expected to be higher.

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~~106 State licensed campgrounds operated by the Dane County Parks Department are one of very
107 few lawful alternatives for people experiencing homelessness who lack access to permanent
108 housing. Dane County Ordinances, at sec. 53.07, regulate the campgrounds. Requirements in
109 the ordinances which place limits on reservations, require online reservations, and require
110 payment for reservation fees are particularly burdensome to people who are using the
111 campground as their primary residence because they have no other housing available.~~

112

113 In July, 2012, in response to a request from the Dane County Board, Madison-area Urban
114 Ministry (now known as Just Dane), issued a report to the Dane County Board on alternative
115 sites for Occupy Madison. Occupy Madison had been operating an encampment in an
116 abandoned car lot on East Washington Ave. The Report provided immediate, intermediate, and
117 long term “responses and strategies to address needs and gaps in services”. One of the
118 immediate responses and strategies was related to car-camping. The report recommended the
119 following to the County Board over 9 years ago:

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- 121 Establish car camping sites or parking spots for those living in their cars;
- 122 1. Identify spots on county owned property, businesses and faith communities
123 parking lots;
 - 124 2. Follow other successful car camping models from around the United States.
125 Examples include Santa Barbara, CA, Eugene, OR, Portland, OR, Los Angeles,
126 CA;
 - 127 3. Create a registration process for those who would like to camp in the available
128 car camping spots;
 - 129 4. Develop a community outreach program to engage neighbors and address
130 concerns regarding car camping in the neighborhood.

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The Delta Variant and High Rate of Community Transmission in Dane County

In early August, the CDC determined that Dane County, like much of the country, was at a high rate of community transmission. On August 17, 2021, PHMDC issued an emergency order, effective August 19, 2021, which requires that everyone age 2 and older wear a face covering or mask when in any enclosed building where other people, except for members of the person’s own household or living unit, could be present. The high rate of community transmission in Dane County and throughout much of Wisconsin due to the Delta Variant necessitates alternatives to congregate shelter for persons who are particularly vulnerable to serious illness from COVID-19.

Opportunities for Collaboration with City of Madison on Temporary and Permanent Housing Solutions and Leveraging Funds

The challenges around unsheltered homelessness in Dane County are not new but, like in communities around the country, they have been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the issues the community is struggling with is a growing reluctance to use group shelter settings, in part, for fear of exposure to COVID. As a result, more and more people experiencing homelessness are choosing to live outdoors, in conditions that are both unsafe and unsustainable. The City of Madison has allocated \$2M in ARPA funds for strategies to provide support outside of the shelter system. Funds provided in this proposal are intended for use to support one or more strategies for people currently living outdoors. Money could be used for such things as purchasing property for use as an encampment; installing basic services like running water, bathrooms or electricity; establishing “tiny homes” or similar structures for use by campers; and paying for on-site staff to support and monitor an encampment site. Additional funds are needed to support the purchase, and operation of the tiny house village community and additional sites to support safe and healthy living arrangements for people experiencing homelessness, particularly unsheltered homelessness. Additional options are also needed for people who are car-camping as that is not included in potential encampment sites.

The City has also allocated \$2.5M in ARPA funds for the purchase of a hotel to convert to housing, with some units designated as permanent supportive housing for people who have been experiencing chronic homelessness. ~~Through the ARPA, Dane County has received a \$2.25M allocation of funds targeted to the expansion of housing. Dane County’s allocation was determined using the HUD’s formula used to allocate annual HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds. While federal guidance for the use of these funds is forthcoming, national webinars regarding best practices for the use of these funds have encouraged the purchase and conversion of hotels for supportive housing for persons who have experienced homelessness.~~

Precedent for Making Exceptions and Waiving Fees to Mitigate COVID-19 Hardship

Throughout the pandemic, Dane County has offered support for property owners and businesses to mitigate COVID-related burdens. In 2020, the County adopted 2020 Res 20

175 allowing municipalities to delay property tax payments and waive penalties and fees on their
176 property taxes. In 2021, the County adopted 2020 Res. 442 which allowed Public Health
177 Madison Dane County to provide a 30% rebate for license fees for businesses. The rebate
178 saves business owners with the most common license \$165.

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180 **Expected Outcomes and Data Collection for ARPA funded projects**

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182 Outreach Services

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184 County funding for outreach services will increase the number of paid staff who are responsible
185 for connecting to people who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness, including those who
186 are living in encampments, living in cars, and living remotely outside. Paid outreach staff offer
187 services, connection to community based resources, and conduct assessments for housing
188 placement for people experiencing homelessness. Increasing paid outreach service will bolster
189 outreach services from other funders, including City of Madison, and help to address a growing
190 unmet need of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

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192 Data collection will minimally include the number of and demographics for the people served by
193 67 the program.

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195 Tiny House Village

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197 Supporting an additional tiny house village, in coordination with the City of Madison, could
198 provide up to 30 tiny house sites and provide a permanent, sustainable housing option for at
199 least 30 people.

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201 Data collection will minimally include the number of tiny houses to be funded, and the number
202 and demographics of people living in the tiny house village.

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204 Purchase and Renovation of Hotels and/or Multi-Unit Buildings

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206 Acquiring an existing hotel and, potentially, multi-unit buildings for conversion to efficiency
207 apartments for low-barrier permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness would add
208 potentially dozens of units designated for people on the coordinated entry (aka "by-name") list.
209 The exact number will depend on the cost and size of the properties and potential supportive
210 services partnerships. The buildings will dedicate a significant number of units to people
211 experiencing chronic homelessness, people experiencing non-chronic homelessness, but may
212 also include units for people without a history of homelessness.

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214 Data collection will minimally include the number of units funded, the number of units dedicated
215 to chronic homelessness, and number of units dedicated to people experiencing non-chronic
216 homelessness, the rent levels of the units, and the number and demographics of people living in
217 the funded projects.

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219 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Dane County shall continue to pursue hotel
220 partnerships to provide safe shelter with previously allocated funds to persons designated in the
221 “vulnerable population” and to avoid returning vulnerable individuals to congregate shelter,
222 unsheltered homelessness, or other unsafe living arrangements. ~~Any funds not spent in 2021~~
223 ~~shall be carried over into 2022.~~

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225 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Dane County allocates \$7M in American Rescue Plan Act funds,
226 to support additional strategies to serve people experiencing homelessness, particularly those
227 experiencing unsheltered homelessness and living in encampments, with expanded services
228 and housing options as follows:

- 229 - \$250,000 to expand outreach services to people experiencing unsheltered
230 homelessness;
- 231 - \$1.5M for land acquisition, planning, development and operation of one or more
232 permanent tiny house village(s);
- 233 - ~~\$5.25M for purchase and renovation of one or more hotels or multi-unit buildings~~
234 ~~to provide supportive, low-barrier housing for people on the coordinated entry by-~~
235 ~~name list.~~
- 236 - ~~Any funds not spent in 2021 shall be carried over into 2022.~~

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238 ~~Any funds not spent in 2021 shall be carried over into 2022.~~

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240 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, provided it is a permitted expenditure under forthcoming federal
241 guidance, Dane County designates its additional \$2.25M allocation under the federal HOME
242 funds formula to contribute to the purchase of a hotel to convert to supportive housing for
243 individuals or couples who have experienced homelessness and are on the coordinated entry
244 “by-name” list. If allowable under forthcoming federal guidance, funds may be used to support
245 the acquisition of a hotel in partnership with the City of Madison, ~~with any funds not spent in~~
246 ~~2021 carried over into 2022.~~ Dane County should also consider authorizing additional ARPA
247 funds or funding in the 2022 Capital Budget for a hotel purchase outside the City of Madison.

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249 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Departments of Human Services, Land and Water
250 Resources, Planning and Development, ~~and~~ Department of Administration, ~~and Public Health~~
251 shall convene a staff team, ~~with Public Health Madison Dane County serving as a consulting~~
252 ~~organization.~~ to prepare a report on implementation of lawful ~~camping and~~ car-camping options
253 in Dane County as first recommended to the County Board in July, 2012. The report shall be
254 presented to the City-County Homelessness Issues Committee no later than 60 days after the
255 adoption of this resolution.

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257 ~~BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Dane County shall temporarily waive the requirements of ss.~~
258 ~~53.07(1), (2), (3), and (5), Dane Co. Ords., for people experiencing homelessness, following a~~
259 ~~referral from outreach workers, and camping in Dane County campgrounds through March 31,~~
260 ~~2022.~~

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262 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Dane County will continue to pursue reimbursement, to the
263 greatest extent possible, from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for
264 expenditures on non-congregate hotel sheltering, particularly for the sheltering of people
265 particularly vulnerable to serious illness from COVID-19 infection and those in quarantine.
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267 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Board requests quarterly reports be shared with
268 the members of the County Board, and that the Health and Human Needs Committee review
269 the reports on a quarterly basis and discuss how the information presented addresses
270 anticipated program outcomes.

271

272 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Dane County, in its 2022 Capital Budget affordable housing
273 development commitment, will prioritize partnerships with nonprofits committed to providing
274 transitional and permanent housing to people who are currently experiencing homelessness,
275 with a strong preference for set asides for persons and families experiencing chronic
276 homelessness.

277

278 *[This substitute incorporates one amendment from the Parks Commission and all amendments*
279 *from Board of Health and the Health and Human Needs Committee, adds language regarding*
280 *ARPA funding in accordance with 2021 Res 013, and updates coordinated entry data on people*
281 *experiencing homelessness.]*

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