



Dane County Department of Human Services

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2020 Resolution-061 Frequently Asked Questions

Background

2020 Resolution-061 would grant \$10,016,100 to the Tenant Resource Center (TRC) to administer a robust eviction prevention program intended to serve nearly 9,000 households in Dane County that are at risk for eviction due to economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial assistance would come wrapped in housing counseling, education for the landlord on federal mortgage protections, case management, outreach, and mediation services.

A normal year would see about 2,300 eviction filings in Dane County. TRC, in consultation with University of Wisconsin-Madison experts in urban planning, estimate that the pandemic could increase the need to anywhere between 6,000-12,000 evictions, costing somewhere between \$6.75 and \$13.5 million to address.

In addition, the resolution provides funding to expand housing navigation services currently provided by Catholic Charities. \$390,000 would help create 4.0 limited term housing navigators with \$245,000 in quick move in funds to assist individuals and families currently sheltering in hotels and guests at the Warner Park shelter with locating, applying for, and moving into permanent housing.

Who is eligible for eviction prevention funds?

Individuals making 80% AMI in their current financial status who also have evidence of economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This equates to about \$75k for a family of four on an annual basis.

The intent is to have a wide enough net to assist people who've likely not found themselves unable to pay rent before.

Applicants will need to prove economic hardship and provide a statement from the landlord of their rental arrears status.

How does a person in need apply for eviction prevention?

The TRC will launch an online application and assessment for renters. The assessment tool will take a number of factors into account to prioritize individuals for assistance, including eviction history, the renter's position/progression in the eviction process, and whether the individual lives in subsidized housing.

Staff will follow up with the applicant to walk them through the process.

What expenses does eviction prevention cover for a renter?

Assistance may include multiple months of rental assistance (up to a limit of four months being fully subsidized).

Who receives the eviction prevention payment?

The renter applies for assistance, and the payment is made directly to the landlord, with the intent that the landlord not evict the tenant.

How did you arrive at the calculation for providing up to 4 months rent for 8,900 households at nearly \$10 million?

The calculation is based on an average monthly rent in Dane County of \$1100/month for a 2 bedroom apartment.

From past experience with eviction prevention, we know some renters will only need help with one month while others could have arrears of up to six months. We also believe the number of people in need is potentially much higher than 8,900. The income threshold of 80% AMI mitigates that.

From a planning standpoint, in conjunction with the Controller's Office, we're also balancing a variety of needs in the community, and the hope for greater flexibility to use the federal funds to offset revenue and for expenses into 2021. The allocation is intended to make a meaningful impact while balancing all those other factors.

What is the Tenant Resource Center?

The Tenant Resource Center has been a leader in eviction prevention, housing counseling, and tenant/landlord rights education and outreach for 40 years.

TRC is the coordinated point of entry for the Dane County/Madison Continuum of Care (CoC) for eviction prevention. They assist with eviction prevention applications and assessments in this role, and have access to and knowledge of a variety of funding sources for eviction prevention. The result is a single point of entry for multiple eviction prevention resources that can be tailored to the individual based on their eligibility for the funds.

More information about the Tenant Resource Center and their services can be found here:

<https://www.tenantresourcecenter.org/>

How will the eviction prevention program reach underserved populations who may be disproportionately affected by eviction?

TRC is partnering with two collaborations, the Latinx Consortium and the Dane County Collaboration of Black Service Providers, to help develop the assistance application and promote the availability of assistance to households in need. The collaborations consist of a number of partners, including:

- Urban Triage, Inc.
- Nehemiah Community Development Corporation
- EOTO
- Foundation for Black Women's Wellness
- FOSTER of Dane County
- Freedom Inc.
- Harambee Village Doulas
- Healing Our Hearts
- The House Urban Arts Initiative
- Madison Alliance of Black Economic Empowerment
- Mentoring Positives
- Neighborhood Connectors
- Peace Network

- Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church
- Unique Madness Social Club
- Centro Hispano of Dane County
- Latino Chamber of Commerce
- Latino Academy of Workforce Development
- Latino Health Council
- Latino Education Council
- Latino Children and Families Council
- Latino Professionals Association
- Latino Support Network
- Common Wealth Development
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County
- Voces de la Frontera - Madison
- Unidos Against Domestic Violence
- Orgullo Latinx LGBTQ+
- Sunshine Place

How will we know the eviction prevention funds are making an impact as intended?

The Department will collect metrics from TRC on impact by measuring the number of tenants who stay housed, and who do not have a subsequent eviction filing in CCAP. We are also collecting data on a measure of timeliness knowing TRC will receive a lot of inquiries out of the gate and will need to be ready to address them quickly.

How will the needs for eviction prevention that present from the City of Madison and from communities outside of Madison (but within Dane County) be balanced?

The calculation of need is on a county-wide level. Part of the benefit of partnering with TRC is that they already manage this function and their screening and assessment process will direct applicants to other funding sources for assistance to the extent that makes sense and is available for the household—thus making these dollars more broadly available for people who might not otherwise qualify for other HUD sources.

TRC will balance based on need, eligibility, and likelihood of having a positive impact, it will not be geographically based. TRC will also be collecting this data (in the City; outside of the City) as part of their monthly reporting to DCDHS so we can evaluate for an appropriate balance.

How will this grant interact with other eviction prevention initiatives?

Department staff have been working closely with our partners at the City of Madison and the United Way throughout our COVID-19 response. We will continue to share information and collaborate to ensure that all resources are being properly coordinated.

In addition, TRC is actively reaching out to other agencies that provide eviction prevention to coordinate services as best they can.

Is the state is looking to use CARES funding in a similar way for eviction prevention?

The State of Wisconsin announced that they will use CARES funding to support eviction prevention efforts as well. Our understanding is that funding will be awarded from the State of Wisconsin to the Wisconsin Community Action Program Association member agencies. In Dane County, Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin (CAC) is that member agency.

It is also our understanding that the total award from the State of Wisconsin will be \$3 million to serve three counties: Dane, Waukesha, and Jefferson (the counties in CAC's service area).

TRC is communicating with CAC about this new resource and potential coordination. The eligibility for both funding sources appears to be similar.

What is housing navigation?

Housing navigation services include assistance locating housing vacancies tailored to the needs of the applicant; curing aspects of a less than perfect housing history, if any; advocacy on behalf of a prospective tenant with a landlord; assistance filling out housing applications; referrals to other services that can be helpful in obtaining housing, such as financial assistance for housing, economic assistance, etc.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Catholic Charities was providing services on-site at The Beacon, The Dane County Job Center, and the Tenant Resource Center. Staff are currently assisting customers via e-mail and over the phone.

More information on housing navigation services can be found at <http://housingnavigation.org/>.

Who is eligible for housing navigation?

The expanded services funded by Res 61 would be targeted to individuals and families currently sheltering in hotels and guests at the Warner Park temporary shelter for men over 18.

How will people access the program?

Catholic Charities has been asked to collaborate with agencies providing services at these locations (Focus Counseling, the Salvation Army, and Porchlight, respectively) to help coordinate referrals to the program.

What are quick move in funds?

Quick move-in funds cover the security deposit and first month's rent for an apartment. Security deposit + first month's rent can be a barrier to entry for individuals who have the income necessary to pay rent, but may not have the savings required to pay these housing costs up front to gain access to the unit.

Staff estimates the number of households that can be served with \$245,000 is 144, based on a security deposit and first month's rent total of \$1,700.

Some individuals with a less than perfect housing history will be approved for an apartment on the condition that they provide a higher security deposit. Some individuals will be able to contribute some of these entry costs, but not all.

What is Catholic Charities?

Catholic Charities has been serving the Dane County area for over 70 years. They support an 11 county region on Southern Wisconsin with programs that help seniors, individuals with disabilities, behavioral health, individuals experiencing homelessness, and more.

In addition to providing housing navigation, Catholic Charities is also a partner with Dane County, the City of Madison, and the United Way on The Beacon day resource center and operates that program.