

1 **SUB ___ TO 2021 RES-156 (PROPOSED WEGLEITNER)**
2 **PURSUING TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE**
3 **EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS AND AUTHORIZING FUNDING**
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5 Dane County has prioritized safe sheltering and eviction prevention throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
6 The County committed funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES”) Act
7 to eviction prevention and has partnered with Tenant Resource Center and Urban Triage to administer
8 Emergency Rent Assistance program funds allocated to the County through federal COVID relief
9 legislation. The County funded Occupy Madison to support the creation of 28 tinier houses for people
10 who had been living outside in 2020 to prevent them from having to live outside during the cold winter
11 months. The County has also funded expanded housing navigation and launched a rapid rehousing
12 program to provide more stable housing options to people experiencing homelessness. The County has
13 funded a hotel sheltering program for families due to the capacity limitations at the family shelter and for
14 individuals who are especially vulnerable to serious illness if infected by COVID-19 (“vulnerable
15 population”) and not sufficiently protected in congregate shelter facilities. At its peak, the hotel sheltering
16 program provided safe shelter to approximately 300 households.
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18 ***Vulnerable Population Hotel Sheltering***
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20 As local public health emergency orders were lifted in June, 2021, it became more difficult for Dane
21 County to secure long term room availability with local hotels who were partnering in the vulnerable
22 population hotel (VPH) sheltering program. In mid-July, the VPH stopped taking new referrals due to the
23 program ending in August, 2021. Currently, there are 139 people in the hotels designated as VPH and 60
24 people are on the waitlist. The last two VPH contracts end on August 25 and August 30, 2021. Neither of
25 the VP hotels are interested in extending the contracts. Housing navigation, hotel sheltering case
26 management partners, and supportive housing providers are working to find permanent housing for the
27 people that remain in the county-funded hotel sheltering and are placing some people. The County is also
28 working to secure new hotel partners. The shelter available to single women operated by The Salvation
29 Army is at capacity. Many people sheltered in VPH were previously living outside in encampments at
30 McPike Park and Reindahl Park.
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32 The County has not yet spent \$2.4M in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds it allocated for hotel
33 sheltering in 2021, but will use these funds for quarantine shelter and new VPH contracts if secured. The
34 County also has allocated funds in the amount of \$2,659,760 for the Hotels to Housing program in 2021
35 and \$1,624,252 is unspent. While 90 persons in the Hotel to Housing program have executed leases and
36 more will lease up in the coming months, estimates show there will be unused funding that can be
37 reprogrammed to support additional services and housing options for individuals and couples
38 experiencing homelessness.
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40 ***Ongoing Need for Supportive Services and Housing for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness***
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42 The Dane County Homeless Services Consortium, our Continuum of Care for U.S. Department of
43 Housing and Urban Development (HUD) homelessness assistance grants maintains a coordinated entry
44 lists (aka “by-name” lists) for housing for all the families and individuals who have been identified through
45 our coordinated entry system as experiencing “literal homelessness” (also known as “category 1”).
46 Persons are placed on this list according to a common assessment tool and the length of time they have
47 experienced homelessness. In order to be assessed and placed on the coordinated entry “by-name” list
48 for housing, the person must have been sleeping in a shelter or another place not meant for human
49 habitation (like an encampment) for at least 7 days in a row prior to their assessment. Persons are

50 experiencing chronic homelessness, according to HUD, if they have a verifiable disabling condition and
51 have experienced homelessness for a total of at least 12 months in the last three years.

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53 As of August 11, 2021, there are 508 individuals on the coordinated entry list in Dane County who are
54 currently experiencing homelessness and almost half of those persons, 238 people, are experiencing
55 chronic homelessness. Racial disparities are significant. Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)
56 make up the majority of the people on the coordinated entry list and 221 people (43%) identify as Black.
57 142 people are seniors (55 and over), 29 are veterans, and 43 are youth (18-24 yrs old) on the list. The
58 average length of time of individuals on the list waiting for a housing placement is 470 days.

59 60 ***Thousands in Dane County at Risk of Eviction Due to Rent Owed***

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62 As of July 5, 2021, 8,573 renters (9.2% of 93,189 total renters) in Dane County are at risk of eviction due
63 to owing back rent.¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), on August 3, 2021, issued a
64 new Order which applies in counties with a substantial or high rate of community transmission. This
65 Order is in effect for 60 days and protects renters from being evicted due to non-payment of rent through
66 October 3, 2021 so long as Dane County remains at a substantial or high rate of community transmission.
67 When the Order is no longer applicable, a significant increase in eviction filings is expected. More
68 evictions will also add pressure on our sheltering and homeless services system.

69 70 ***Growing Number of People Living in Encampments and Cars***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

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

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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.

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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.

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

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

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

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

- \$250,000 to expand outreach services to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness;
- \$1.5M for land acquisition, planning, development and operation of one or more permanent tiny house village(s);
- \$5.25M for purchase and renovation of one or more hotels or multi-unit buildings to provide supportive, low-barrier housing for people on the coordinated entry by-name list.

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

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

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Dane County will continue to pursue reimbursement, to the greatest extent possible, from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for expenditures on non-congregate hotel sheltering, particularly for the sheltering of people particularly vulnerable to serious illness from COVID-19 infection and those in quarantine.

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

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201 Chapter 53 dane co ords <https://www.countyofdane.com/documents/pdf/ordinances/ord053.pdf>

202 April presentation

203 <https://dane.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9343655&GUID=A1A06C85-5781-41DC-8022->

204 [24583519C314](https://dane.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9343655&GUID=A1A06C85-5781-41DC-8022-24583519C314)

205 Res 11 RRH

206 <https://dane.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4922335&GUID=FD4C440B-6C7C-4810-88E4->

207 [586E0E616970](https://dane.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4922335&GUID=FD4C440B-6C7C-4810-88E4-586E0E616970)

208 City investment chart for housing and homelessness 2021 ARPA and 2022

209 <https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9500443&GUID=1F47D089-A775-466B-AF13->

210 [E22B407E21E1](https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9500443&GUID=1F47D089-A775-466B-AF13-E22B407E21E1)

211 CDC encampment guidelines

212 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered->

213 [homelessness.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered-homelessness.html)

214 NAEH and FEMA

215 <https://endhomelessness.org/fema-response-and-homelessness-during-covid-19/>

216 NLIHC letter re FEMA reimbursement

217 <https://nlihc.org/resource/nlihc-led-disaster-housing-recovery-coalition-calls-fema-release-guidance->

218 [extend-full?utm_source=NLIHC+All+Subscribers&utm_campaign=5082676db4-DHRC-Update-7-8-](https://nlihc.org/resource/nlihc-led-disaster-housing-recovery-coalition-calls-fema-release-guidance-extend-full?utm_source=NLIHC+All+Subscribers&utm_campaign=5082676db4-DHRC-Update-7-8-)

219 [2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e090383b5e-5082676db4-291673033&ct=t\(DHRC-Update-7-8-](https://nlihc.org/resource/nlihc-led-disaster-housing-recovery-coalition-calls-fema-release-guidance-extend-full?utm_source=NLIHC+All+Subscribers&utm_campaign=5082676db4-DHRC-Update-7-8-2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e090383b5e-5082676db4-291673033&ct=t(DHRC-Update-7-8-)

220 [2021\)](https://nlihc.org/resource/nlihc-led-disaster-housing-recovery-coalition-calls-fema-release-guidance-extend-full?utm_source=NLIHC+All+Subscribers&utm_campaign=5082676db4-DHRC-Update-7-8-2021)

221 FEMA non-congregate sheltering

222 <https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/FEMA-Non-Congregate-Sheltering-During-the-COVID-19-Pandemic.pdf>

223 Dane Co Out of Reach NLIHC

224 [Out of Reach 2021: Wisconsin](https://rethinkinghomelessness.org/)

225 <https://rethinkinghomelessness.org/>

226 HUD ESG COVID19 grantee guidance

227 https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/homeless_esg_covid-19

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