



# Addressing Homelessness in Eau Claire

*Friday, January 30*

*Thanks to our host...*





# Addressing Homelessness in Eau Claire

*Friday, January 30*



Thank you to our Investors!

VISIONARY

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Thank you to our Investors!

## ADVOCATE

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**Eau Claire Energy  
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

**MJ &  
Johnson**

*Adding Value to Everything We Do*



Marshfield Clinic  
Health System



MAYO CLINIC  
HEALTH SYSTEM

**Nicolet**  
NATIONAL BANK

**NB**  
NORTHWESTERN  
BANK



University of  
Wisconsin-Stout  
Wisconsin's Polytechnic University

**WEAU 13 NEWS**





Thank you to our Investors!

## CATALYST

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Associated Bank	Eau Claire County	Hy-Vee	River Valley Architects
Benedict Sales & Service	Eau Claire School District	Kwik Trip	Royal Construction
BMO Bank N.A.	EO Johnson Business Technologies	McDonough Manufacturing Company	Silver Spring Foods, Inc.
Cascades Tissue Group	Festival Foods	Minnesota Wire	Trubilt Collision Center
CCFBank	Godfrey & Kahn, S.C.	Miron Construction Co., Inc. PESI, Inc.	UKG Inc.
City of Eau Claire	HeartWorks	Plank Enterprises	Veritas Steel
Double Forte	Hoeft Builders, Inc.	Prevail Bank	

## EXECUTIVE

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Ayres Associates	Compeer Financial	Itechra	NBI, Inc.	The Business News
Barks & Recreation	Eau Claire Co-op Oil/	King Pin Management	NEI Electric Inc.	The Phoenix Taproom & Kitchen
Bauman Associates, Ltd.	Chippewa Valley Energy	Landmark Company	OakLeaf Clinics, SC	U.S. Bank
Cambridge Senior Living	Global Finishing Solutions, LLC	Lee Beverage of Wisconsin LLC	OakLeaf Surgical Hospital	Venture Academy
Cellcom	Group Health Cooperative	Markquart Motors	Oakwood Health Services	WQOW-TV 18
Circle K	of Eau Claire	Morrie's Eau Claire Subaru	One Nation Exteriors	WRR Environmental Services Co., Inc.
City of Altoona	Intek Plastics	Mower Sperry Insurance Agency	Rock Falls Raceway	
Cintas				



# **Altoona's innovative Housing Initiatives**

*Friday, February 27*

*River Prairie Center*

32nd Annual



Chippewa  
Valley Rally



CHAMBER ALLIANCE  
Chippewa Falls • Eau Claire • Menomonie

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**THURSDAY**

February 19, 2026





32nd Annual



Chippewa  
Valley Rally

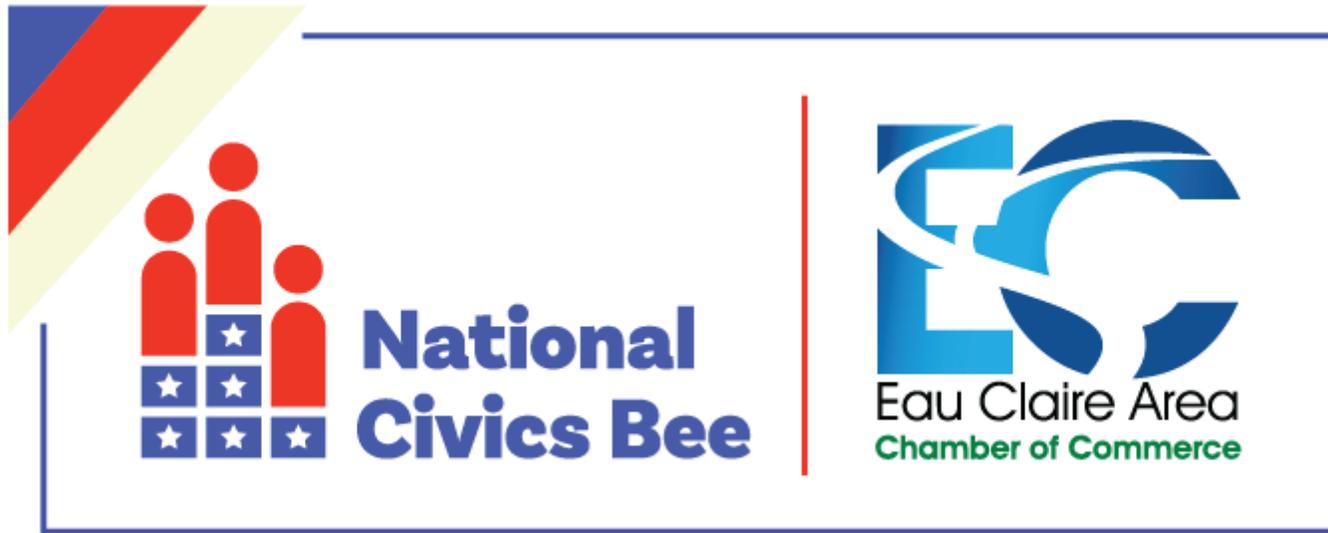


CHAMBER ALLIANCE  
Chippewa Falls • Eau Claire • Menomonie

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**THURSDAY**

February 19, 2026



**Essay portal now open for the  
2026 Wisconsin competition  
*Deadline February 3***



**Monday, February 2**

**Eau Claire Golf & Country Club**

***4:30-6:00 p.m.***



# E A U

## WHAT A NIGHT

• Thursday, February 12, 2026 •



# Addressing Homelessness in Eau Claire

*Friday, January 30*

## OVERVIEW:

# Addressing Homelessness and the Need for Affordable Housing in Eau Claire

A community strategy developed by the Housing Our Neighbors Planning Collaborative



## WHAT'S THE CURRENT STATE OF HOMELESSNESS?

Homelessness has been increasing in Eau Claire for a long time. In 2025, there were as many as **198 unique individuals** using a day shelter each month. There are many people at risk of losing their housing as well: **one-third of households in Eau Claire County** are struggling to afford basic needs or are **spending more than 30% of their income on rent.**

## WHAT IS THE HOUSING OUR NEIGHBORS PLANNING COLLABORATIVE?

A community-wide initiative that builds on the previous and current work being done to end homelessness in Eau Claire County. There are many organizations involved in this project: local government, service providers, nonprofit organizations, community members, and anyone else who wants to be involved.

**THE GOAL: Make homelessness brief, rare, and non-recurring across Eau Claire County.**

## THE STRATEGIES:

The Collaborative mapped the work that has been done in Eau Claire, researched what has worked in other communities, and hosted listening sessions for homelessness service providers and community members. Then, six strategies were identified to begin addressing homelessness in Eau Claire:



### Align the system

Improve local organizations' collaboration to close gaps in service and provide an efficient, coordinated homelessness response system.



### Share data strategically

Establish data sharing procedures to get an accurate and timely understanding of homelessness in our community.



### Strengthen outreach

Meet our neighbors experiencing homelessness where they are, and provide evidence-based, trauma-informed support and resources that may help them.



### Prevent homelessness

Prevent homelessness when possible by providing intervening early and providing intervention strategies.



### Ensure affordable housing

Work to develop and maintain genuinely affordable housing in Eau Claire with limited barriers and efficient supports.



### Community engagement

Build a deeply engaged community that supports our neighbors and fights the stigma surrounding homelessness.

## Get involved!

Do you see your work or passions in these strategies? Want to share your time, ideas, or funds? Email [ehousingcollab@eauclairecounty.gov](mailto:ehousingcollab@eauclairecounty.gov) to get involved.

READ THE FULL PLAN:



1 BETTER WAY

wd eoc

WESTERN DAIRYLAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL



DAY  
RESOURCE  
CENTER



**ONE BETTER WAY**

# Community Haven House – Day Resource Center

**Brett Geboy**  
Hope Gospel Mission

1 BETTER WAY

ROCKET











**ONE BETTER WAY**

# Community Haven House – Day Resource Center

**Brett Geboy**  
Hope Gospel Mission



**HOUSING OUR NEIGHBORS  
PLANNING COLLABORATIVE  
OF EAU CLAIRE COUNTY**

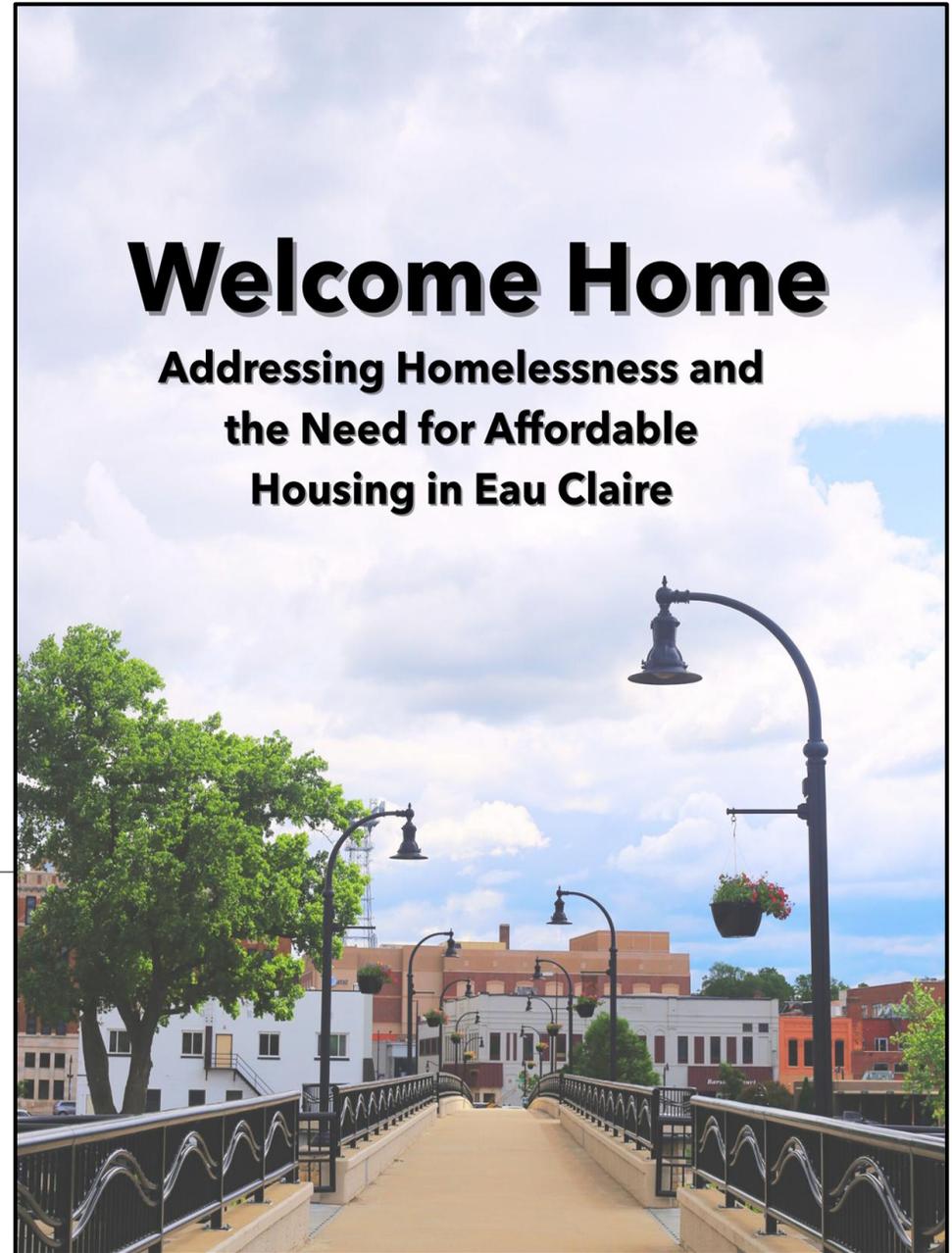
# Community Report

*Addressing Homelessness in Eau Claire County*

“Community is much more than belonging to something; it’s about doing something together that makes belonging matter.”  
— Brian Solis

## **Welcome Home**

**Addressing Homelessness and  
the Need for Affordable  
Housing in Eau Claire**

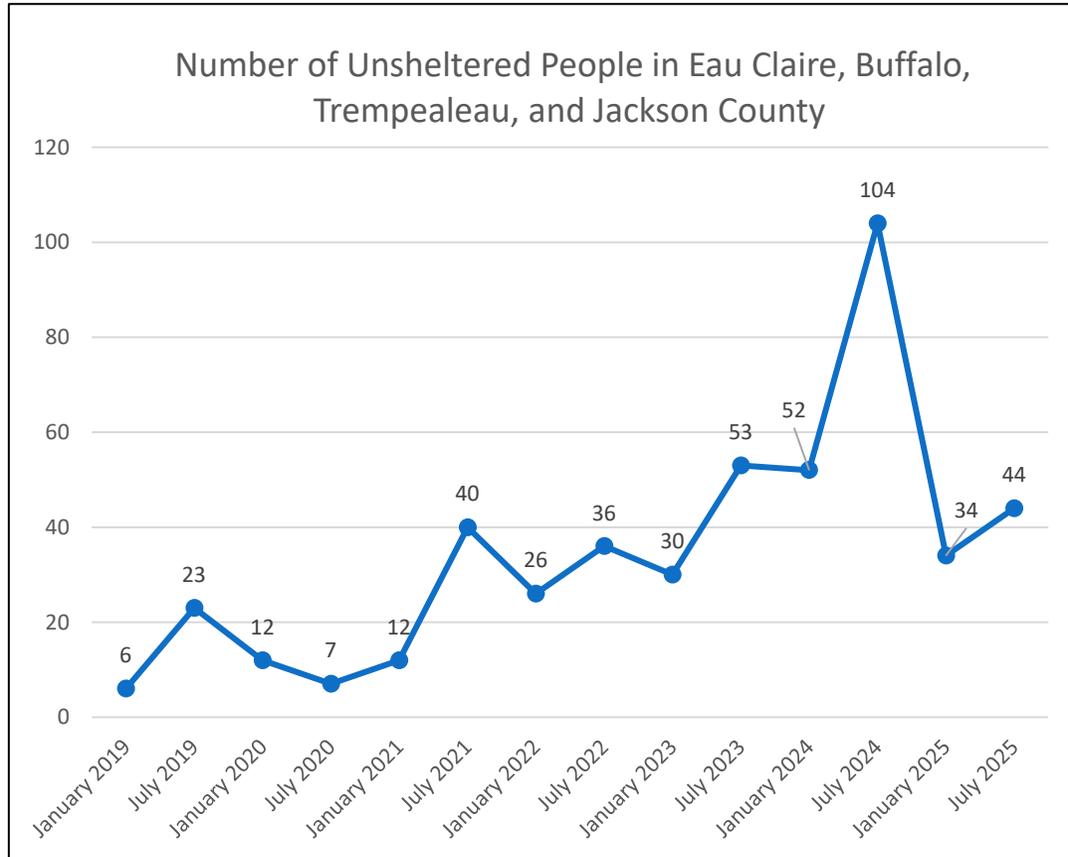


# Objectives:

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- Provide background information on homelessness in Eau Claire
- Describe how the Housing Our Neighbors Planning Collaborative began
- Review the process of creating the community strategy
- Highlight current success stories
- Outline the community strategies and next steps

# Homelessness in Eau Claire



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536 guests visited Haven House from April-December 2025

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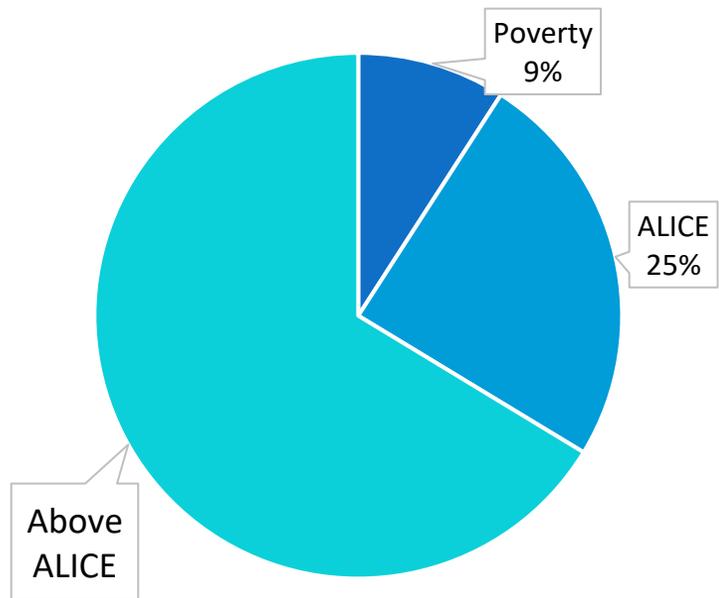
Average of 85 guests have been visiting the new Day Resource Center since opening on December 29<sup>th</sup>

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# Many Are At Risk

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*1/3 of Eau Claire residents cannot afford basic needs*



**\$21**

Wage renters must make to afford a 2-bedroom apartment

**116**

Hours people earning minimum wage must work in a week to afford a 2-bedroom apartment

**37%**

Of renters are cost-burdened (spending more than 30% of their income on rent)

# Homelessness is Expensive

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**\$40**

Cost of staying in a shelter overnight for **one night**

**\$354**

Cost of a **single filing** with the Eau Claire County legal system

**\$112**

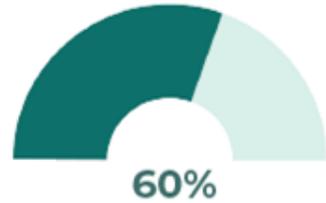
Cost of staying in the Eau Claire County Jail for **one night**

**\$1756**

Cost of **one day** of adult psychiatric services at Mendota and Winnebago Mental Health Institute

## Community Health Survey...

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Housing is very expensive throughout the county



Having (or not having) safe and affordable housing affects all other parts of one's life



There is a lack of housing stock in this area



Much of the available housing in the area is in unsafe conditions

# Identified as a Community Priority in 2024

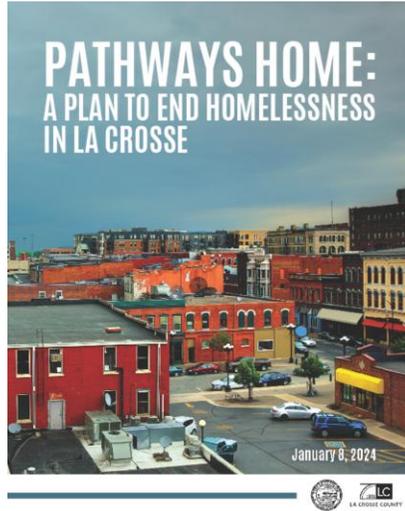
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Top five issues most in need of improvement in the community:

1. Alcohol misuse
2. Poor mental health
3. Lack of access to childcare or unaffordable childcare
4. Substance misuse
5. **Lack of safe or affordable housing**



GREATER GREEN BAY BLUEPRINT  
TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS



# Knowledge Building and Network Outreach

- Met with local communities to learn about their processes and findings
- Emphasized a need for:
  - Clear leadership and accountability
  - Accessible and affordable housing with services
  - A public facing document with shared goals and strategies to lead the work

Taxpayers have saved over **\$30 million** or **\$3.5 million** per year since Housing First.

## Housing First policy impact on homelessness in Milwaukee

Rates of homelessness remained stagnant for a decade before Milwaukee County implemented Housing First policy at the end of 2015.

↓ 46.3%

Overall homeless population reduced by 46.3% in 5 years

↓ 91.8%

Unsheltered, street homelessness reduced by 91.8% in 5 years

↓ 65%

Sheltered chronic homelessness reduced by 65% as of 2023

## Overall Homelessness in Milwaukee County 2007-2023



# How the Collaborative Started

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The film *Beyond the Bridge: A Solution to Homelessness* was brought to Eau Claire. Other efforts, like the Day Resource Center, are launched by the community.

**September 2024**



**October 2024**

The EC City-County Health Department, EC County DHS, and the EC Area Chamber of Commerce commit to bringing Eau Claire together to address homelessness

Jim Mathy from the Milwaukee County Housing Department presented to community representatives and small groups (housing, law enforcement, EC Chamber board, and Jonah/Dairyland Leadership)

**December 2024**



**May 2025**

Information was collected from service providers, local leadership, community members, and other interested entities to inform the community strategy

Data is summarized and used to create six strategies. Local data and context is added to the plan, and the Planning Collaborative meets regularly to review and edit the document. A meeting is held with service providers to review strategies

**June-October 2025**



**January 2026**

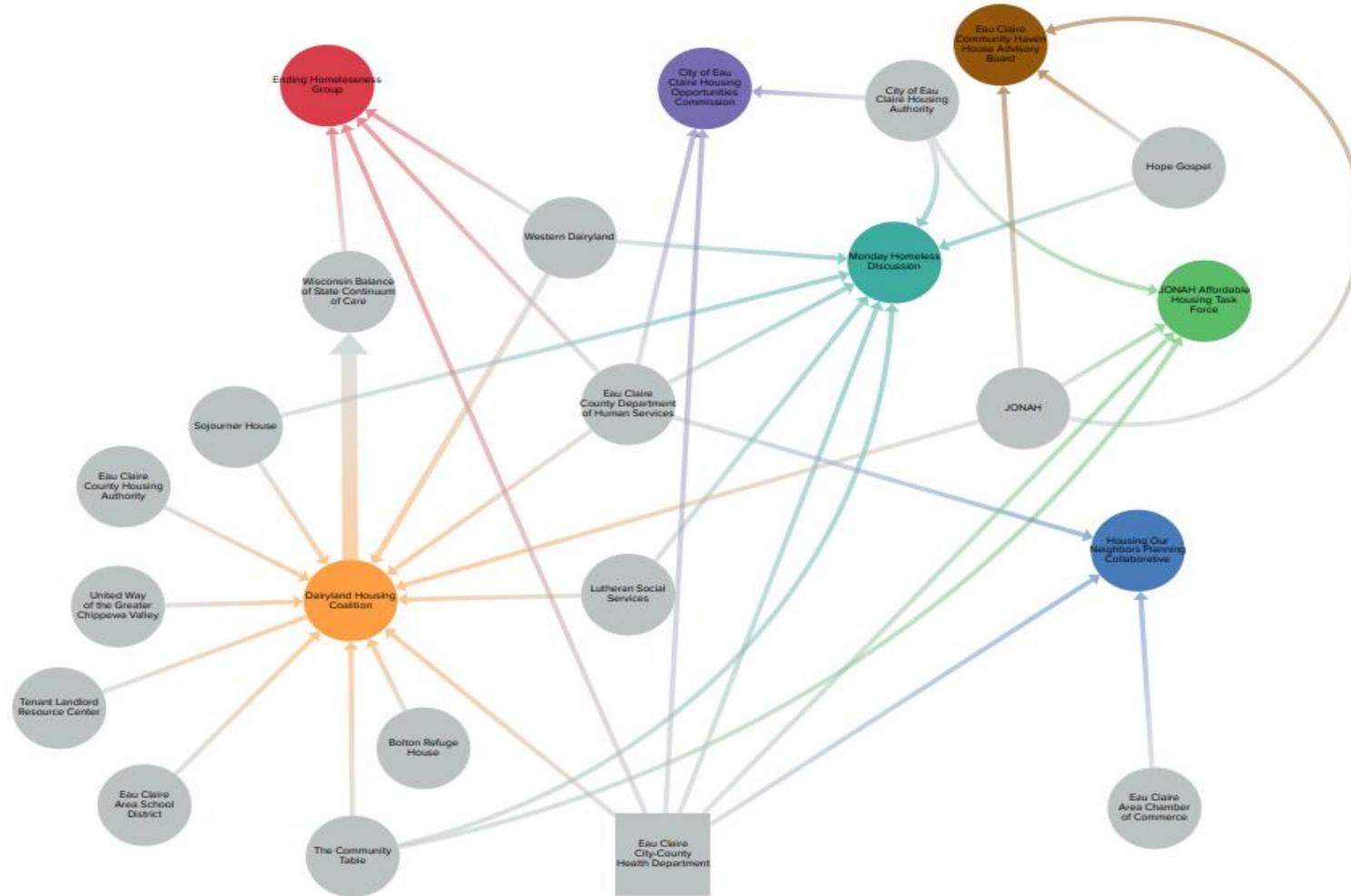
Community strategies approved by Planning Collaborative. The document is sent out to service providers and interested entities for final feedback

# Input into the Plan

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- Three meetings held with homelessness service providers
  - Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results
  - Theory of change activity
  - Review resource map
- Citizen's assembly hosted by University of Wisconsin-Madison La Follette School of Public Affairs
  - Invitation distributed across Eau Claire
  - 20 people selected as representative sample
- Survey sent to City Council, City department heads, Board of Health, County Board, and local leaders

# Significant work has been done





## Lived Experience is Crucial

“Our first battle in ending homelessness is realizing people who experience homelessness are human. Someone who is unhoused in your community is your neighbor.”

–National Coalition for Ending Homelessness

**OUR GOAL**

**Homelessness is brief,  
rare, and non-recurring  
in Eau Claire County**

# FUNCTIONAL ZERO

Number of people getting  
housed is greater than the  
number of people becoming  
homeless



People  
becoming  
housed



People  
becoming  
unhoused



# HOUSING OUR NEIGHBORS PLANNING COLLABORATIVE



Eau Claire City-County  
Health Department



- Provide centralized leadership and background support to collaborative efforts addressing homelessness
- Track metrics to ensure we are reaching our desired outcomes

# What Does This Report Do?

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- Provides information on the current state of homelessness in Eau Claire through local data
- Gathered feedback from service providers, local leaders, organizations, and people with lived experience to identify what we need to do to reach our goal of function zero in Eau Claire
- List six strategies that act as guideposts as we continue to work and build a collaborative system



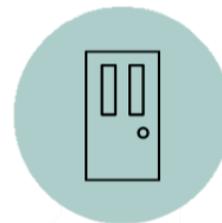
**Align the system**



**Strategic data sharing**



**Strengthen outreach**



**Prevent homelessness**



**Ensure affordable housing**



**Community outreach**

# What Does This Report *NOT* Do?

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## ***Tell people what to do***

- Strategies are guided by the community
- Flexibility is intentional

## ***Repeat past or current efforts***

- Prevents duplication
- Builds on existing work

# Strategy 1: Align the System

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*Cultivate a strong network among all local homelessness service providers and government entities to improve coordination and reinforce a unified approach to ending homelessness*



Simplify the process of accessing housing with support services



Strengthen connections between local organizations



Clearly articulate a strong and dedicated leadership structure



Incorporate perspectives of people with lived/living experience



Use accurate, local, and contextual data to make decisions



Create a clear communication plan

# Strategy 1: Align the System

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## One-Year Action Items

- Create a roadmap that clearly articulates entry points into services for people experiencing homelessness.
- Create a resource map that's shared with the public.
- Create a formal leadership structure with guaranteed roles and compensation for people with lived/living experiences

## Example Metrics to Measure Progress

- Amount of time people spend on housing lists (*coordinated entry list, Housing Authority lists, or others*)
- Number of warm handoffs between agencies
- Average number of interactions people have with different organizations
- Ability to name and trust partners within the local network of service providers

# Strategy 2: Share Data Strategically

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*Establish a comprehensive, real-time data collection and sharing system to create a clear and accurate understanding of homelessness in our community*



Integrate a “high-quality, real-time, by-name” data system for all homeless service providers



Consistently monitor progress and share information transparently



Protect the privacy of our neighbors with clear data sharing guidelines



Use data to encourage continuous improvement in collaboration, identifying and closing gaps, and using data to guide decision-making

# Strategy 2: Share Data Strategically

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## One-Year Action Items

- Establish data sharing agreements between homelessness service providers
- Design and develop the “By-Name” data system
- Create a dashboard so de-identified data can be publicly and regularly reported

## Example Metrics to Measure Progress

- Number of people homeless in Eau Claire
- Number of organizations involved in entering data into the “By-Name” List
- Measuring risk factors and outcomes related to homelessness and housing, such as services used, time spent homeless, or others.

# Strategy 3: Strengthen Outreach

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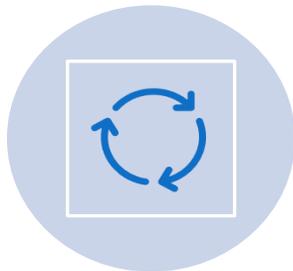
*Change how our community supports our neighbor's experiencing homelessness and recognize the profound trauma many have endured*



Expand the capacity and resources of outreach teams that meet people where they are and link them with what they need



Include staff trained in different fields, such as medicine and social work, and provide training opportunities



Focus on housing people who regularly cycle through homelessness, incarceration, and other crisis services



Strengthen re-entry support for people who are leaving institutionalized contexts

# Strategy 3: Strengthen Outreach

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## One-Year Action Items

- Design, fund, and launch a multidisciplinary, trauma-informed outreach team for Eau Claire County
- Encourage opportunities to integrate and expand peer support services across our local homelessness response system
- Identify and engage people with the most frequent law enforcement interactions and focus on diversion and trauma-informed engagement

## Example Metrics to Measure Progress

- Number of interactions with people experiencing homelessness and the homeless response system
- Number of referrals made and followed up on
- Number of emergency services and law enforcement encounters responding to neighbors experiencing homelessness

# Strategy 4: Prevent Homelessness

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*Prevent people and families from experiencing homelessness in the first place by intervening before they become homeless.*



Increase local rental assistance programs



Build paths to permanent housing for people at highest risk of homelessness



Use creative funding sources, like Medicaid 1915i, to support more housing options



Explore innovative housing options that are inexpensive and high-quality



Strengthen relationships with landlords and housing authorities to identify early warning and offer more secure housing for hard-to-rent groups

# Strategy 4: Prevent Homelessness

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## One-Year Action Items

- Pilot a low-cost landlord engagement and relationship-building program
- Quantify what local rental assistance is available and streamline access
- Build paths to housing for groups with barriers

## Example Metrics to Measure Progress

- Number of evictions in the county and breakdown by reason
- Availability of resources and use of resources for people who need additional supportive services
- Number of rental assistance dollars being used and amount that are available

# Strategy 5: Ensure Affordable Housing

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*Develop and maintain genuinely affordable, permanent housing with integrated supportive services for everyone in our community*



Develop a comprehensive housing plan that builds on the 2023 Eau Claire Regional Housing Study.



Support the development of affordable housing stock through a variety of funding sources



Expand availability of housing by building relationships with landlords and exploring opportunities to support housing



Support creation of local subsidy program and encourage business incentives for workforce housing



Promote the building of public housing and public-nonprofit collaborative housing

# Strategy 5: Ensure Affordable Housing

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## One-Year Action Items

- Promote short-term housing options and create a roadmap to access
- Develop a long-term regional housing plan identifying the number and types of units needed
- Work with landlords and developers to develop a report on increasing affordable housing stock

## Example Metrics to Measure Progress

- Number of people who become housed after experiencing homelessness
- Number of available housing units where total cost is less than 30% of area median income
- Number of housing units with long-term supports based on tenants' needs

# Strategy 6: Heightening Community Engagement

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*Build a deeply engaged community that understands, supports, and actively participates in ending homelessness*



Collect, develop, and share stories that create a common, shared narrative while still exploring nuances



Engage faith groups, businesses and other residents to support our neighbors who are homeless and people recently housed



Ensure natural supports are embedded in personal housing plans



Create purposeful community education about homelessness

# Strategy 6: Heightening Community Engagement

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## One-Year Action Items

- Develop a website with stories and educational content about homelessness
- Create positive community events that bring unhoused and housed people together
- Explore programs that offer social supports while in housing

## Metrics to Measure Progress

- Level of community engagement with homelessness education campaigns
- Number of public engagement opportunities and attendance

# What's Going Well

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- An outreach team has been created through the Department of Human Services and now meets weekly with individuals and build relationships
  - Initial data is being collected for the “by-name” list
- Over 15 organizations have signed a releases of information and are participating in coordinated case conferencing
  - Bi-weekly meetings are held to prioritize individuals with the highest needs
- The City of Eau Claire Housing Authority and Eau Claire County Housing Authority collaborated to create a 4-page housing application
- Eau Claire County has begun initial steps toward a county-wide housing assessment

# What Happens Next?

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- Document has been distributed to service providers, local government, and community partners for final feedback
- The Community Strategy will be presented to community groups to identify opportunities for engagement and partnership
- The final document will be released on the Eau Claire County Department of Human Services website, and implementation planning will begin
- The Planning Collaborative will establish a governance structure to provide leadership, coordination, and accountability
- As data is collected, a public dashboard will be launched to track progress toward key outcomes

# Who's Involved in the Work Going Forward?



Healthcare systems



Churches and faith-based groups



Philanthropic entities



Government organizations



Landlords, developers, and neighborhoods



Nonprofits and service providers



Businesses



Law enforcement and justice systems



Community members and lived/living experience

# Panel – Q&A

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**HOUSING OUR NEIGHBORS  
PLANNING COLLABORATIVE  
OF EAU CLAIRE COUNTY**

## **Paul Savides**

JOHAH Affordable Housing Task Force

## **Mara Langreck**

Lived Experience Advisory Board

## **David Minor**

Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

## **Julian Emerson**

City of Altoona

## **Angie Stokes**

Eau Claire County DHS