



---

## Badger State Housing Alliance Newsletter

August 2023



### A Call to Action - Marlo Fields WISCAP

It seems that every week we are presented with an article or a study that iterates an ongoing housing crisis in communities in and around our nation. For instance, the National Low-Income Housing Coalition's Out of Reach report has found that in Wisconsin 24% of renter households live below 30% area median income and another 42% live below 50% AMI. The Coalition's 2021 Gap Report shows that there is a deficit of 126,000 rental units available for extremely low-income renters. Meanwhile, the US Interagency Council on Homelessness has found that in Milwaukee, "Zero families have lived outside on the streets since 2020 and that families staying in shelters has declined by 72 percent." Thus, allowing the claim that Milwaukee is on the verge of being the first city in America to end family homelessness; a claim many find dubious given how HUD defines homelessness and how archaic their PIT counts are.

All these numbers are just that: numbers. They don't accurately reflect the human reality known by thousands in every corner of our nation, state, and communities. Diving deep into the numbers ironically numbs the reader to the stark situation -- it prevents us from seeing our neighbors, friends, co-workers, and family as humans facing the impossible choice between their child's housing stability or their next warm meal. The data doesn't tell the stories of hundreds of Wisconsinites, who having no available alternatives, must lay their head down on a street bench, living in fear of the ever-growing effort to criminalize the necessity of sleep. It doesn't show you how evictions have kept black communities, particularly black women, in a continual cycle of housing instability. It doesn't show you the thousands of veterans who sleep on dead-end roads while motels, malls, and supermarkets lay abandoned in every community, like modern-day Ozymandias: a continual reminder of America's unfulfilled promises.

These all-too-real scenarios are easy to view as isolated incidents that happen seemingly at random to unfortunate families and individuals. Even when studied as a larger housing crisis it is easy to silo this problem as the residual effects of a post-Great Recession America; that the greed of America's richest citizens is fueling instability for the bottom 99%. Though all are true, the housing crisis, along with the growing disparity between stagnant wages and the rising cost of living, a concentrated attack on organized labor, and countless other systemic issues facing poor and working-class households, must be looked at through the lens of a system that can no longer sustain human necessities. Instead, it demands a sincere and bold response from our elected officials.

It is easy to isolate away from what seems like an almost impossible task, but if there is anything that human history has proven is that all things must pass. When thousands of us come together and demand change, in unity, it makes what was seemingly impossible individually, attainable.

In that vein, WISCAP has joined and helped lead the Badger State Housing Alliance (BSHA), Wisconsin's statewide housing advocacy network. The alliance is a big tent made up of developers, case workers, education and healthcare professionals, and community leaders, who want to not only see realistic and achievable changes to the current system but are emboldened to ask, "How do we make a more equitable and accessible system?" If you find yourself asking that same question, let's consider how we can do better. BSHA has been at it for almost a year, and in that year, we have met with countless community leaders who through their labor and expertise are finding breakthroughs in their respective communities. These achievements need to be celebrated, expanded, and made into an accessible reality statewide. The Badger State Housing Alliance helps provide that avenue, but its success is only as strong as the vision and will of its participants.

## **A Note From Andy: To move the needle on affordable housing in WI we need YOU!**

Evictions are at an all-time high and every city is building market-rate housing that is increasingly resetting the 'market' while often being subsidized by public dollars. In Madison, African Americans' median income is below the median rent. Are we institutionalizing racism with our housing policies? Can gerrymandered elected officials be urged to act?

We need permanent affordable housing. It is no mystery. Yet we struggle to meet needs. You can play a role in making change in Wisconsin. Please help us build the Badger State Housing Alliance and begin to figure out how to do a better job meeting needs.

Our next quarterly meeting is Thursday, September 7, from 9-10 am. You can join [here](#).

We need more members on our monthly steering committee, our Affordable Rental Housing and Affordable Home Ownership workgroups, and will be introducing a new workgroup to develop a Blueprint for WI Housing. If you are interested, please add your contact information [here](#).

How can we get your ideas in the mix? We want to share and support excellent local projects, policies, and processes while pushing the State and Federal governments to do more. With your involvement, we can!

In the meantime, we are planning our first advocacy day next spring and starting in September CURDs of Wisdom will return for your hungry hearts and brains.

**Cooperman's Corner: Housing Advocacy Organizer, Courtney Cooperman**

**Members of Congress Are in Town: August is the Time for Advocacy!**



With Congress out of session, Senators and Representatives are back home in their districts for the month of August. The August recess creates an ideal opportunity for constituents to build relationships with their elected officials and advocate on key federal policy priorities—including housing and homelessness resources in the federal budget. Now is the time to schedule in-district meetings with your legislators’ offices, invite members of Congress on site visits, and use social media to amplify messages and stories about the importance of these programs!

[The National Low Income Housing Coalition’s \(NLIHC\) Congressional Recess Toolkit](#) offers comprehensive resources for organizing in-district meetings and site visits with members of Congress. The toolkit contains templates for requesting a congressional meeting, steps for setting up a site visit, sample social media messages, tips for effective storytelling, and talking points on NLIHC’s top policy priorities. Check out the toolkit here!

If you need contact information for staff members in your elected officials’ offices, or if you have questions about federal advocacy, please reach out to NLIHC Housing Advocacy Organizer Courtney Cooperman at <mailto:ccooperman@nlihc.org>.



## Curds of Wisdom



### [REGISTER HERE](#)

The Curds of Wisdom speaker series is a free, monthly forum focused on creating and preserving housing options throughout Wisconsin. The series aims to share effective practices and build relationships among advocates and practitioners. Please join us whether you are an elected official or a motivated neighbor! Curds of Wisdom is co-sponsored by [WISCAP](#), [League of Wisconsin Municipalities](#), and [the Wisconsin Council of Churches](#). Time and date....

The next series starts in September! We are starting a series on “Good Development, Making it Happen in your Community”.

#### **September 13 - Mid-Sized City Case Study: Eau Claire**

- Kate Felton, Eau Claire City Council
- Susan Wolfgram, JONAH
- Billie Hufford, City of Eau Claire

**October 11 - Greater Fox Valley**

**November 8 - Framing the Message**

**December 13 - Rural Examples**

If you have ideas for our Curds of Wisdom Speaker Series, please reach out to Marlo Fields and Andy Heidt at <mailto:mfields@wiscap.org> and <mailto:aheidt@wiscap.org>



**Poverty Matters September 27-28**

# 2023 Poverty Matters Conference

Please join us for the 39th Poverty Matters Conference September 27-28 at the beautiful, newly renovated La Crosse Center, where we will bring together organizations and individuals to share strategies & trends, network, and achieve a better understanding of how low-income individuals, families, and communities can work together to promote economic opportunity. The conference will feature national and local experts speaking on topics ranging from Workforce Development to Housing & Issues relating to Homelessness to Racial Inequities to Advocacy, and more!

**Summit on Poverty  
September 14-15**



*The Social Development Foundation is a long time sponsor of the Summit on Poverty. We express our sincere gratitude to each of our sponsors for making this event possible.*

Join us at the Social Development Commission (SDC)'s 2023 Summit on Poverty from September 14-15, 2023 at the Hyatt Regency Milwaukee. Our goal is to expand learning, engagement, and advocacy by providing access to community action agencies, human service, government, and education professionals nationwide. Learn more about the Summit on Poverty.

The Summit on Poverty is an annual catalyst for change and provides a safe space for well-informed, honest discussion. We are proud to continue our support as we work to identify and mobilize resources to move people out of poverty. [Click here to view photos from the 2021 Summit on Poverty.](#)

We look forward to seeing you for the 2023 Summit on Poverty!

## **Funding Announcement!**

### **Employment Grant – Expanded Eligibility & Application Now Open**

The Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources (DEHCR) has opened the 2024 Employment Grant (EG) application (due 10/20/23). This grant (up to \$75,000) focuses on connecting people experiencing homelessness with permanent employment by providing employment and training opportunities. Eligible applicants include municipalities (counties, cities, villages, or towns) and federally recognized tribal governing bodies (new this year). Full details as well as the application can be found on the [EG program website](#).

### **A Home For Everyone Recap:**

Thank you to everyone who helped make the 2023 A Home for Everyone conference a success, including 298 attendees, 41 speakers, and 37 sponsors. A special thanks to our top tier sponsors: Associated Bank Foundation, Housing Ministries of Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Housing Preservation Corp. Please plan to join us next year in Madison on July 17 & 18, 2024. More info coming soon: <https://ahomeforeveryone.events/>

[Learn More](#)

### **What are Manufactured Homes?**

The Wisconsin Housing Alliance and MidCountry Homes are inviting housing advocates to explore the exciting world of manufactured homes. Wisconsin has a serious shortage of attainable workforce housing. Wisconsin Housing Alliance represents the manufactured and modular housing industry in Wisconsin, which could be a significant solution to this problem. MidCountry Homes in Dorchester is having an open house to showcase the technologically advanced building process and several homes on display to view. Learn more at their [website](#).

[RSVP](#)

### **You're Invited?**

Community Development Alliance of Milwaukee is hosting Forever Affordable Housing planning event on Wednesday, Sep. 6 from 9am-5pm. Join them and countless other housing advocates in Milwaukee to plan for the future of quality affordable homeownership in the 414.

[Register](#)

### **Badger State Housing Alliance**

We are in the process of building a contact list of individuals who would like to receive updates on housing issues across the state. Please feel free to pass this newsletter along to any colleagues, elected officials, friends, family members or anyone you think would benefit from this effort. You can also share the link below for folks to sign up for this distribution list.

[Learn more about BSHA](#)

[Subscribe to BSHA Newsletter](#)

