



Badger State Housing Alliance Newsletter

September 2023



For items and dates of subcommittee meetings and archived material please check out our [website](#).

Social Development Commission Summit on Poverty



One word that came to this writer's mind when thinking about Milwaukee was: honest. At SDC's (Social Development Commission) Summit on Poverty, guests were treated to an honest look at roots and effects of poverty, racism, and classism in Wisconsin's largest metro. The two-day conference featured 4 keynotes, none of which held back their punches as they tackled topics ranging from the long-term psychological effects of childhood corporal punishment to the necessity of providing pathways for young boys and men to express their emotions. Moreover, the breakout sessions featured intimate conversations about obstacles in housing and homelessness, innovative strategies to educate children, and the nutritional gap in low-income communities.

However, it wasn't just the depth of topic that made this conference special. What makes it special is that SDC provides space and time to not only truly process the emotional depth of working and conversating in this arena, but to also celebrate the spirit of comradery and love that is infectious and necessary for everyone involved in the seamlessly endless War on Poverty.

Although most of the conversations in the conference centered around disparities in Milwaukee, poverty knows no geographic location, and the lessons that were learned are applicable to every community in our state. Milwaukee, by its sheer size, are often exaggerated examples of poverty that happen in every corner of Wisconsin.

[2023 Summit on Poverty \(Video\)](#)

Cooperman's Corner: Housing Advocacy Organizer, Courtney Cooperman

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



With the end of the fiscal year approaching, Congress faces a deadline of September 30 to take action and prevent a government shutdown. To give the Senate and the House more time to reach an agreement on a final budget for Fiscal Year 2024, Congress must pass a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) to extend government funding at current levels. However, House Republicans have put forward a highly partisan CR that would keep the government open for 30 days in exchange for slashing non-defense spending by 8% and attaching provisions of Republicans' controversial border security bill. This CR would stand no chance of approval in the Democratic-controlled Senate. The Senate will instead likely take up and pass its own, bipartisan CR to send back to the House. Speaker McCarthy will then have the option of bringing the Senate-passed CR to the House floor for a vote, or – knowing the bill would likely pass with bipartisan support – caving to the demands of far-right Republicans and refusing to do so, forcing a government shutdown.

Meanwhile, the Senate's progress towards passing a "minibus" of three FY24 spending packages – including the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) funding bill – stalled last week, after Senators Ron Johnson and others refused to provide unanimous consent due to procedural concerns. Still, the chamber is expected to vote on the THUD spending bill this week.

Advocates should reach out to express support for an FY24 budget that contains the maximum resources for housing and homelessness programs and adequately funds programs that serve the lowest income people. Use NLIHC's Legislative Action Center to send a message in support of our top appropriations priorities:

- The Senate's proposed funding for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance and Project-Based Rental Assistance programs, which provides funding to renew all existing voucher contracts and expand vouchers to an additional 4,000 households.

- Full funding for public housing operations and repairs.
- The Senate’s proposed funding for Homeless Assistance Grants.
- The Senate’s proposed \$20 million for a new program for legal assistance to prevent evictions. The House bill eliminates this program.
- The House’s proposed funding for the Native American Housing Block Grant program, which proposes a 40% increase from current spending levels.



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....

In September we kicked off the fall series on “Good Development, Making it Happen in your Community”, with a conversation with Eau Claire housing leaders.

In October's edition we look to the Fox Valley! Please join us and Lynnsey Erickson of the Oshkosh City Council and Lu Scheer, Winnebago County Housing Grants Specialist and former Affordable Housing Director at ADVOCAP and will discuss affordable housing opportunities and challenges in the Fox Valley. Bill Van Lopik (ESTHER), and Jennifer Verderami (ESTHER Housing Advocate) will join this robust conversation.

Wednesday October 11

12-1p;

[To register click here:](#)

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>



Add your support to the Wisconsin Opportunity Act

This past week in the Wisconsin State Capitol, WISCAP (Wisconsin Community Action Program) Executive Director, Brad Paul, joined Representative Lisa Subeck and Senator Jeff Smith to announce the Wisconsin Opportunity Act, comprehensive legislation designed to aid communities in the fight against poverty. [This act](#) includes a significant number of proposals related to affordable housing and homelessness services. WISCAP's statewide network of community action agencies look forward to supporting this effort and urge all members of the Badger State Housing Alliance to [endorse](#) the bill and ask their state senator and representatives in co-sponsoring the bill.

Funding Announcement

Employment Grant – Expanded Eligibility & Application Now Open

The 2024 Recovery Voucher (RV) Grant application opened 9/20/23 and is due 10/27/23. This program helps people diagnosed with or receiving treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) and who are also experiencing homelessness (HUD categories: 1, 2, 3 (new, starting in 2024), and 4) find safe interim housing for themselves and their families (new, starting in 2024) in Department of Health Services recognized recovery residences. Applicants will become RV Administrators and their role will include accepting client referrals, checking client eligibility, entering clients into the program, working with recovery residences to find available beds, placing clients, and paying monthly recovery residence dues. Applicants are encouraged to apply for the maximum award of \$125,000 (made up of 3 fund types: client assistance, case management, and administrative). Full details can be found on DEHCR's website.

Movin' Out: The André'



The André was named in honor of one of our longest serving team members, André Brown, who inspired the creation of Movin' Out. As a child, André attended Red Caboose Childcare, which is now located on the ground floor of this building. This building will connect residents to high quality childcare services on site and will connect Red Caboose teachers and others to affordable housing opportunities.

A short program with special guests will begin at 3:30 PM; building tours will follow.

The André Apartments - Community Room

2340 Winnebago Street

Madison, WI 53704

www.movin-out.org



USDA 515 Program

Like urban areas in the U.S., rural areas currently face a housing affordability crisis. Approximately 6.9 million (27%) of rural or small-town households are considered “cost-burdened” (paying more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs). Since 1949, **USDA’s Section 515 program has been an effective strategy for creating affordable rents in rural areas of the U.S.** The program provides low interest loans for building multifamily rental housing, restricting the amount of rent that can be charged to tenants. Section 515 rental housing is frequently coupled with Section 521 Rental Assistance, ensuring these homes are affordable to rural residents with extremely low incomes.

Section 515 properties are required to maintain affordability restrictions for the life of the loan (50 years), but properties lose affordability when their mortgages mature. The Midwest will see large proportions of its Section 515 properties **mature out of the program earlier than the U.S. overall.** The peak of mortgage maturations for Section 515 properties in the Midwest will occur in 2030, about 10 years before the peak in mortgage maturations occurs for Section 515 properties in the U.S.

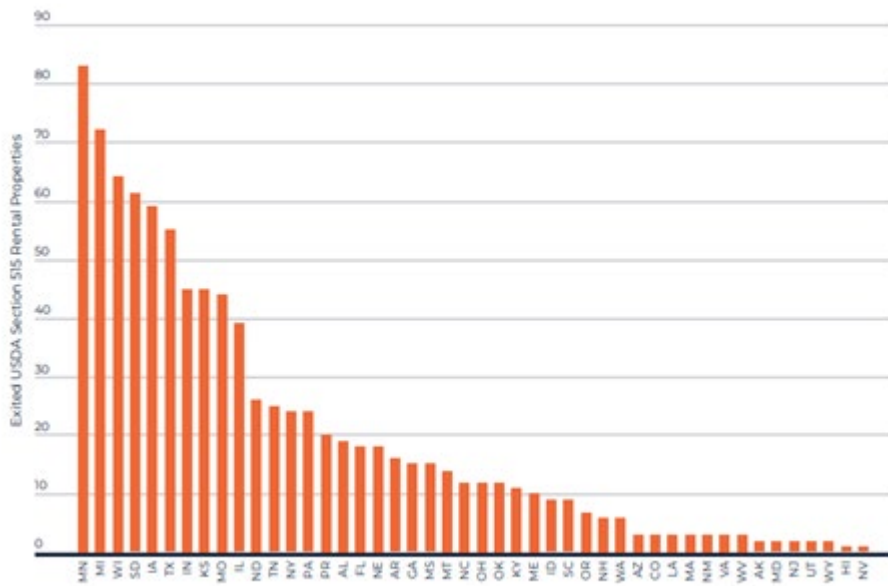
According to [research by the Housing Assistance Council](#), Wisconsin is one of the top five states, all in the Upper Midwest, with Section 515 homes exiting the program and losing affordability.

A 2023 Report, [The USDA Section 515 program and the Challenge of Preserving Affordable Housing in Greater Minnesota](#), analyzes some of the unique characteristics of Section 515 properties in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota and recommends policy solutions, including decoupling rental assistance from mortgages so properties can remain affordable to rural residents and streamlining the property transfer process to help preserve these homes.

This is a solvable problem and now is the time to act. Encourage your member of Congress to support the recently introduced Rural Housing Service Reform Act of 2023 (S.[1389](#)). The Rural Housing Service Reform Act of 2023 would streamline the decoupling process as Section 515 mortgages mature, preserve rental assistance for low-income tenants residing in these properties, and provide stability for property owners and investors.

BSHA will discuss the future Section 515 rural rental homes, including learning about 515 properties in your WI, preservation options and resources for these homes, and policy and program reform opportunities.

USDA Section 515 Property Exits by State, 2016-2021



Source: Housing Assistance Council Tabulations of USDA Data

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.

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