



## Badger State Housing Alliance Newsletter

October 2023



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

### BSHA Quarterly Recap

[Recording](#): Passcode: 0nE1wMm+

### A Frightening Reminder

October has come and nearly gone! A month that allows us all to embrace the scary side of things. The spooky decorations go up, the scary films start playing and Big Candy rakes in 40% of their revenue. For many it's not Chucky or Freddy that terrifies them but the reality that they are one car breakdown or medical emergency away from losing their home as the "[leaves that are green, turn to brown](#)", and Old Man Winter rears his ugly head.

The housing crisis facing the nation is a terrifying one, much like the villains that terrorize characters in horror movies. Many of you, through your work and leadership in your communities, know this reality all too well. The Badger State Housing Alliance needs your help to change the script of this horror movie and start fighting back. If you haven't already, please sign up for leadership positions within this group. Additionally, many of you are on the front lines and we want to hear your stories so they can be shared with the rest of the network to inspire and spur change! If you have any questions as always, please reach out to Marlo and Andy! ([aheidt@wiscap.org](mailto:aheidt@wiscap.org) and [mfields@wiscap.org](mailto:mfields@wiscap.org))

## Rural Housing Needs: A Voyage to Northern Wisconsin

As part of our work with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Homelessness (WCAH), WISCAP staff members Marlo Fields and Andy Heidt made visits to the Community Partners Campus in Wausau which includes a homeless shelter, a robust food pantry, and is home to multiple homeless service providers including. [North Central Community Action Program \(NCCAP\)](#), [Northwest Wisconsin Community Service Agency \(NWCSA\)](#) facilities, and [The Brick's](#) newest homeless shelter. In addition, WISCAP/WCAH conducted a listening session in the Chequamegon Bay Area that attracted service providers, consumers, a state legislator, and a cross section of community members.

While in Wausau, the team learned how the lack of affordable housing and the narrow HUD (Housing and Urban Development) definition of homelessness limits the scope and potential impact of some funding tools for needy households. Sadly, NIMBY has also reared its head, as some members of the Wausau community strongly objected to and prevented the construction of a 6-unit facility designed to assist families with incomes between \$18,000-\$36,000 per year. Andy and Marlo also visited the Good Shepard Shelter, a volunteer-driven shelter that can house 25 men or women and is based on harm reduction principles. It is a beautifully intended facility, but the need for additional resources for case management and supervision would allow it to be significantly better and safer. The comprehensive array of health, employment, economic support, food, and case management services available in the building speak well to strong community commitment to house the homeless safely as the community simultaneously tries to minimize encampments.

To wrap up their travels, a listening session on affordable housing and homelessness was conducted at Northwoods Technical College. The event was coordinated with individuals from the cities of Bayfield and Ashland and the Red Cliff, and Bad River Reservations. The session drew 34 participants representing various backgrounds. A meal was provided, and gift cards (\$10) were provided to consumers to offset transportation and other costs.

The listening session revealed the gravity of methamphetamine abuse and the complexity and barriers to effective treatment, the lack of available housing options, and the lack of transportation and well-paying jobs. Despite those revelations, there was a unique sense of resilience and a commitment to do more to build services and support that help more young people stay in this region, help more unhoused people find a safe roof over their heads, and a path to self-sufficiency.

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

### Take Action to Prevent Harmful Amendments in the Federal Budget!



The US Senate Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) is set to vote on its fiscal year 2024 (FY24) draft spending bill as soon as this week. Senators have proposed several amendments to the Senate's THUD bill, including some that would slash

funding, impose needless barriers to receiving assistance, or restrict HUD funds for equity initiatives. Other amendments would provide additional funds for Homeless Assistance Grants and other critical programs. Advocates should reach out to their members of Congress and urge them to support amendments to increase funding for HUD programs, and to oppose any harmful amendments that would cut funding, impose barriers to assistance, or defund HUD's equity initiatives.

Meanwhile, legislative work in the House of Representatives—including the enactment of an FY24 spending bill—is stalled until the House elects a new Speaker, following the removal of Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) from his leadership position. Committee work, however, has continued, and representatives have introduced several harmful amendments to the House THUD bill that would cut funding for HUD programs, weaken fair housing laws and enforcement, and restrict access to federal housing assistance.

Advocates should reach out to their senators and representatives and urge them to support maximum possible funding for housing and homelessness programs, including full funding to renew all existing housing vouchers. Visit the [Legislative Action Center](#) to [send a message](#) to your members of Congress in support of NLIHC's top priorities for the federal budget and to join the [budget sign-on letter](#)!

Please reach out to Courtney Cooperman, housing advocacy organizer, at [ccooperman@nlihc.org](mailto:ccooperman@nlihc.org) with questions.



## 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 October we continued our fall series on “Good Development, Making it Happen in your Community”, with a conversation with Fox Valley housing leaders.

In November's edition Katie Bannon, Zoning Administrator City of Madison, WI and Rabbi Bonnie Margulis from Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice will discuss messaging on good housing in Wisconsin and how we frame the message to make affordable housing happen. Katie recently was involved in successfully increasing the number of unrelated people allowed to live together in a household in Madison. Rabbi Bonnie has long pushed social justice issues particularly on housing and immigrant workers in Madison and South Central WI.

Kristine Giornalista from the Badger State Housing Alliance will moderate this exciting discussion.

Wednesday November 8

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>



## **Helping People Access Affordable Rental Housing Using Landlord Mitigation Funds.**

Michael Basford - Director of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

“Landlord Mitigation”, or “Risk Mitigation”, programs have been used successfully for years by states, counties, and municipalities across the country. These programs are used as part of known best practices for engaging and recruiting landlords for participation in local housing programs. These programs are administered in a variety of ways, and can be used before, during, or after tenancy. Funding can be made available either through grants or revolving loan programs. The programs can be tailored to serve landlords who rent to certain subpopulations, such as people experiencing homelessness, those who have rental assistance vouchers, are at certain income levels, etc. The goal of these programs is to mitigate perceived risks landlords face when they rent to people who would otherwise face barriers to securing housing on account of their income or rental history, or that their housing is supported by rental vouchers or other assistance. The benefits of having a risk mitigation program include:

- Funding can be used by landlords to bring units up to HUD Housing Quality Standards and local building codes in order to increase the housing stock available for assisted tenants.
- Helping landlords continue to engage in programs for assisted tenants after properties have been damaged.
- Assisting non-profit homelessness services providers to start and grow their own housing portfolios.

Implementing such programs leads to positive results. Tedd Kelleher, Senior Managing Director of Housing Assistance for the State of Washington, was on Wisconsin Public Radio recently talking about the work Washington is doing to address homelessness in their state. Describing the Washington Landlord Mitigation Program, he said:

“If you’re housing one of those tenants and there’s some damage to your unit, the state will reimburse the damage to that unit. So, to the extent that there’s a perception that there’s increased risk of renting to people with lower incomes and maybe some poor rental histories, the state will provide a backstop and in some ways it’s frankly an incentive because we’ll also pay some back rent. It’s an incentive over typical other sorts of renters...So we’re really just trying to smooth that path and to reduce the risk that landlords might experience, and it does work quite well.”

In Wisconsin, the only similar program I am aware of is the La Crosse Landlord Mitigation Program. It has been running for nearly a year and during this time, landlords through the program have been incentivized to house seven people who would have otherwise been denied housing. Establishing a landlord mitigation fund is included as part of Strategy 3.2 of the “Welcoming Wisconsin Home” statewide plan on homelessness. Governor Evers has requested funding for a mitigation program in each of his three biennial budgets – including asking for \$2 Million annually in the most recent budget. Unfortunately, Wisconsin’s legislative majorities removed funding from each of the recent state budgets.

While we work to produce a statewide program for landlord risk mitigation, counties and municipalities can learn from these examples, and to create smaller projects to expand housing opportunities at the local level. Producing more affordable housing units to end homelessness as we know it requires an “All Hands on Deck” effort. Risk mitigation programs will increase housing opportunities for our state’s neediest and will help cement landlords and property managers as our partners in this effort.

Michael Basford has been Director for the State of Wisconsin’s Interagency Council on Homelessness since 2019.

## **Support Workforce Housing Legislation**

Support Workforce Housing. If you can, please email your state representative and state representative today to support LRB-049. The bill could be heard as soon as tomorrow. This is a bill for \$100,000,000 for workforce home loans. This bill is supported by Wisconsin and Milwaukee Habitat among many other allies. You can find your elected official at <https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov> (enter your full address in upper right hand corner and click magnifying glass).

## **Support the Wisconsin Opportunity Act**

[Comprehensive Legislation](#) to aid communities in the fight against poverty Check out the [Senate Bill](#) and urge your state legislators to co-sponsor!

## **Community Development Alliance: All-Ally Meeting**

Our next all ally meeting is Tuesday, 11/21/23, Noon to 1:30. [Meeting Registration](#) - Zoom Help us set our agenda for next year!

## **Job Opportunity**

Fair Housing Center of Greater Madison is [hiring!](#)

## Wisconsin Philanthropy Network Statewide Conference

Attend Wisconsin Philanthropy Network Statewide Conference. [This conference](#) is not just for philanthropic professionals, but for all partners looking to build their skills, make connections, and learn about philanthropic trends. This year's conference is at St. Kate – Arts Hotel in Milwaukee November 8-9 and the objectives include understanding equity and trust-based approaches in philanthropy.

## Leadership Development Opportunity!

Building off the success of the amazing Project Management Workshop, the Zilber Family Foundation, in partnership with OneEleven Leadership, is offering several additional virtual trainings, including Leading from the Inside out, Leveling up from Manager to Coach, Working Through Change, and other equity based courses. [Click here for a summary.](#)

## 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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