

# State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

---

Unsheltered Homelessness in Wisconsin

May, 2024



# Michael Basford

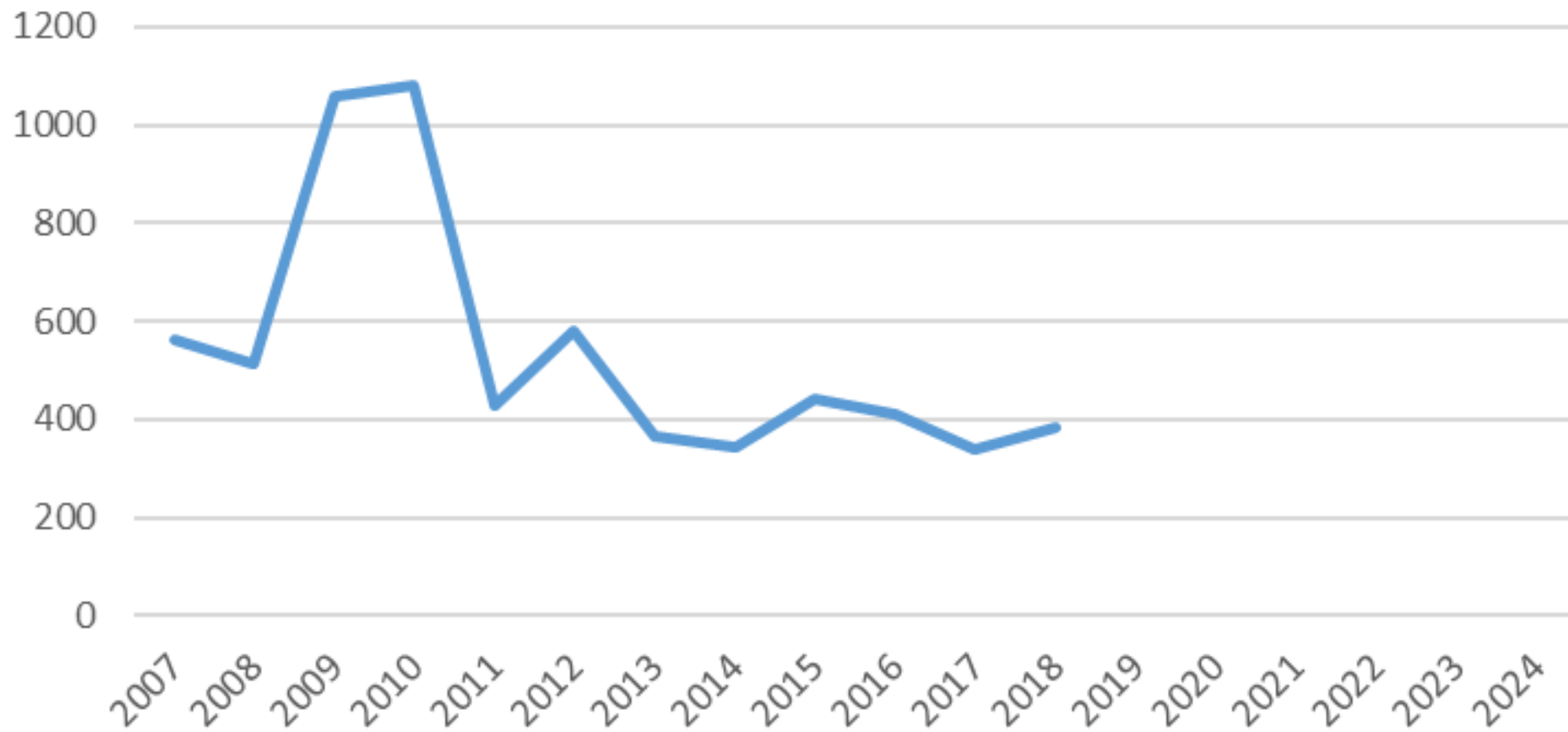
Director

State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

101 East Wilson Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53703  
<https://homelessness.wi.gov>

Phone: 608-266-3633  
[mike.basford@wisconsin.gov](mailto:mike.basford@wisconsin.gov)

## Unsheltered Homelessness in Wisconsin 2007-2018

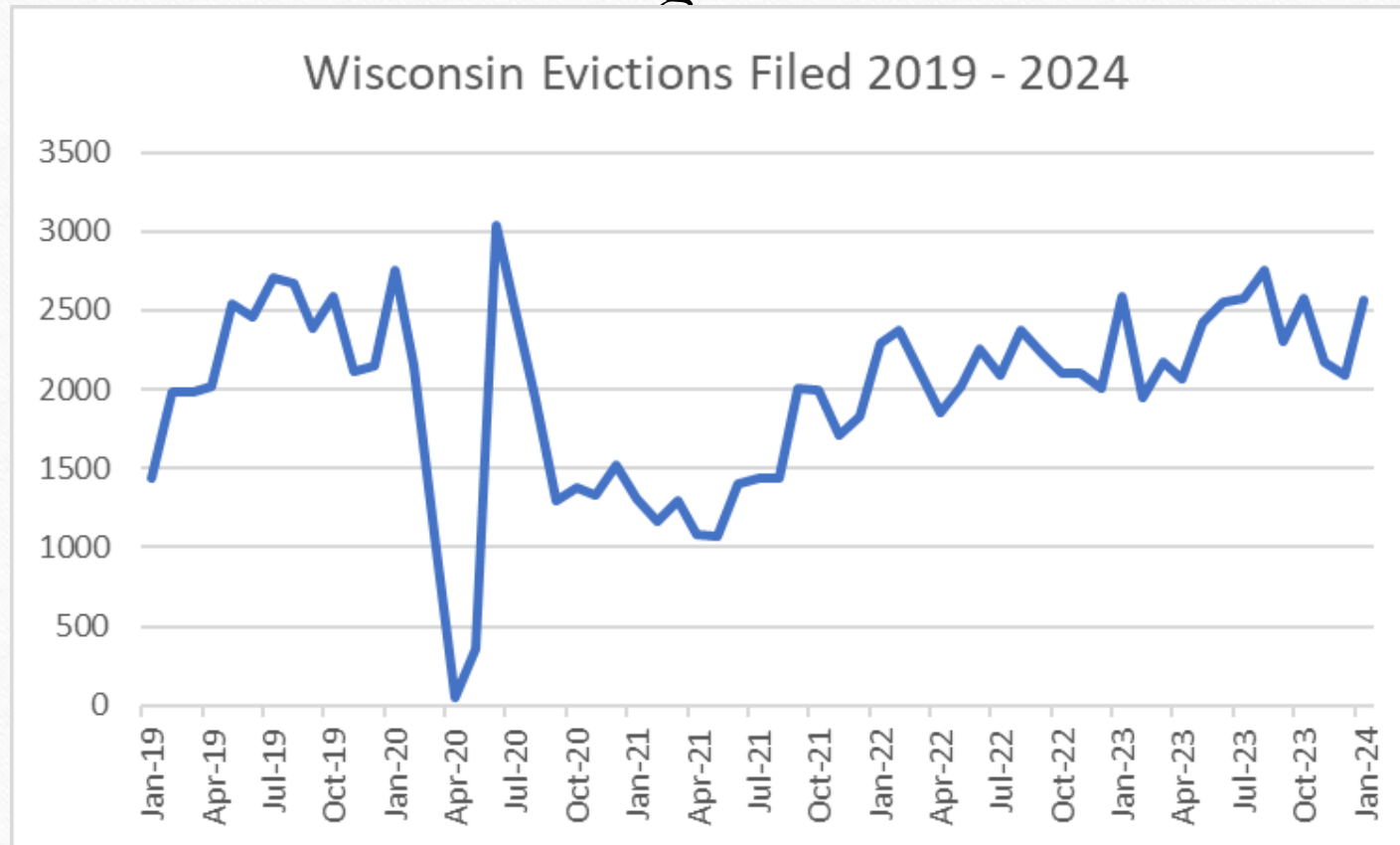


# Factors in Unsheltered Homelessness

- Availability of affordable housing. Wisconsin is short 123,864 available rental homes for Extremely Low-Income renters. 72% of ELI renters are severely cost burdened (“Housing Needs by State – Wisconsin, National Low Income Housing Coalition)
- Rising rental rates. For example, Brown County FMRs for 2BR units increased \$233 from 2020 to 2024 (28% increase).

# Factors in Unsheltered Homelessness

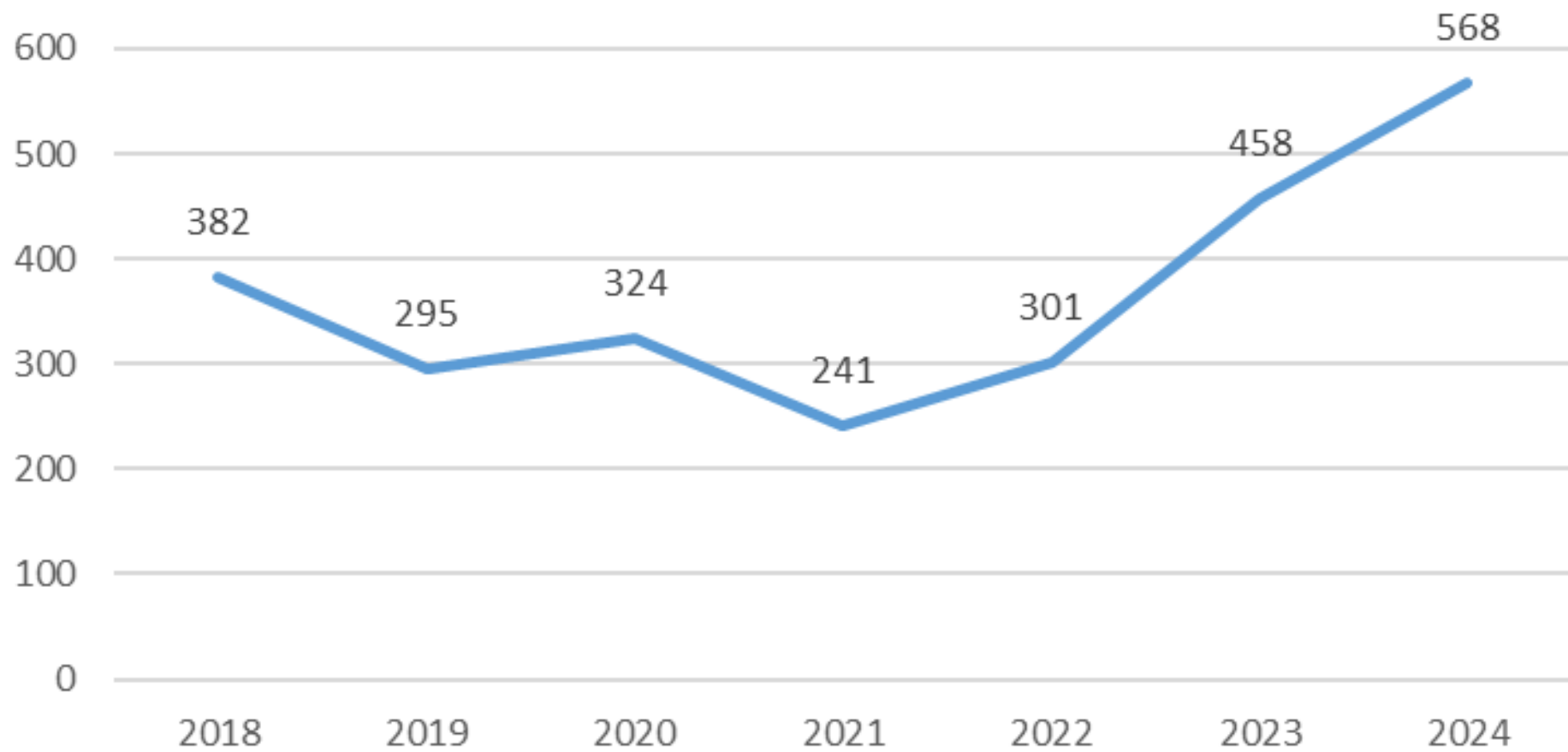
- Increases in eviction filings



# Factors in Unsheltered Homelessness

- Availability of shelter/beds
- Homelessness services agency capacity
- Availability of supportive services

## Unsheltered Homelessness in Wisconsin 2018-2024



# Counties with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness

2023

## >30 People

Brown, Dane, La Crosse, Milwaukee

## 20-29 People

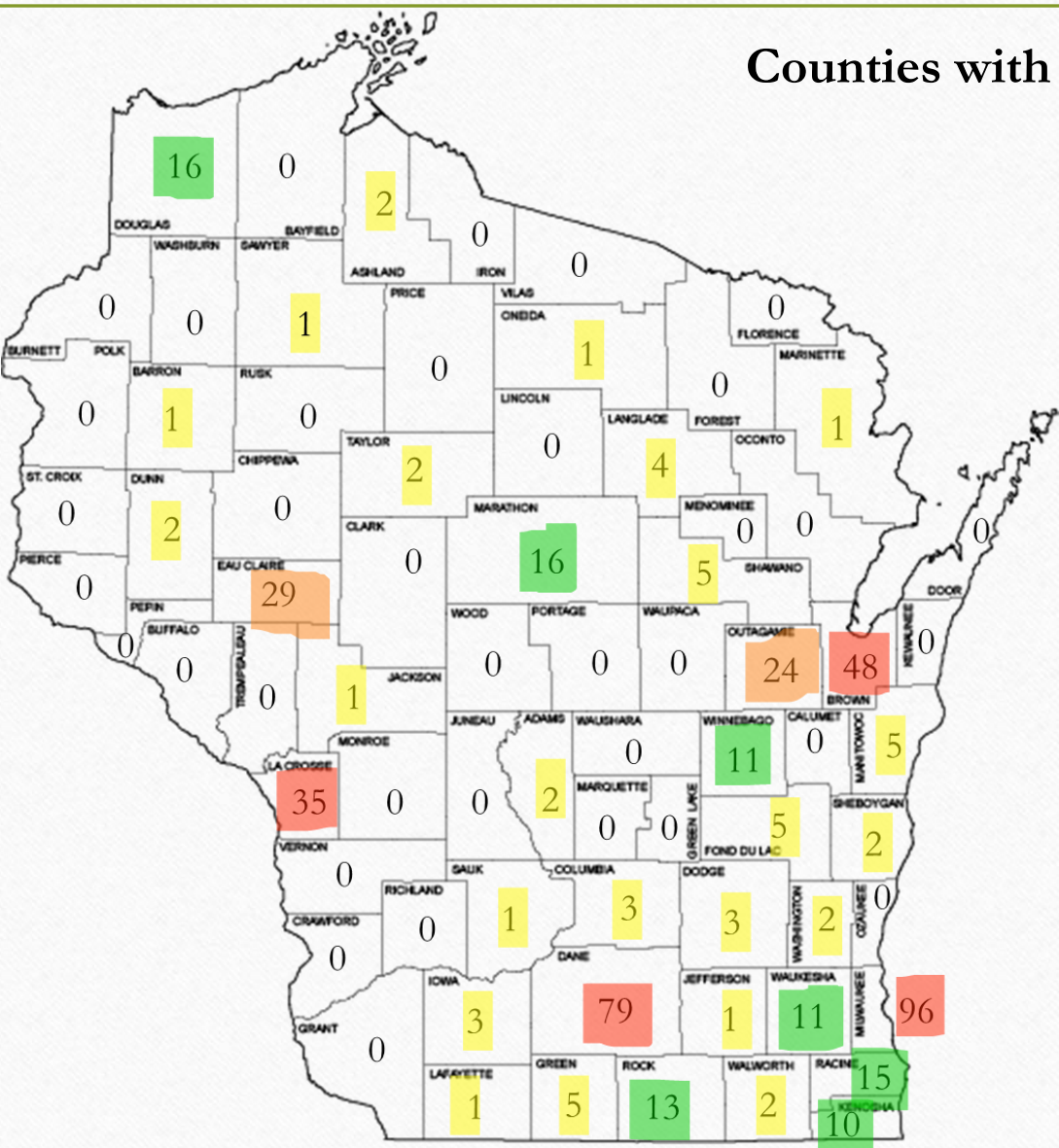
Eau Claire and Outagamie

## 10-19 People

Douglas, Kenosha, Marathon, Racine, Rock, Waukesha, Winnebago

## 1-9 People

Adams, Ashland, Barron, Columbia, Dodge, Dunn, Fond du Lac, Green, Iowa, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Langlade, Manitowoc, Marinette, Oneida, Sauk, Sawyer, Shawano, Sheboygan, Taylor, Walworth, Washington





# Counties with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness

2024

## >30 People

Brown, Dane, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Outagamie

## 20-29 People

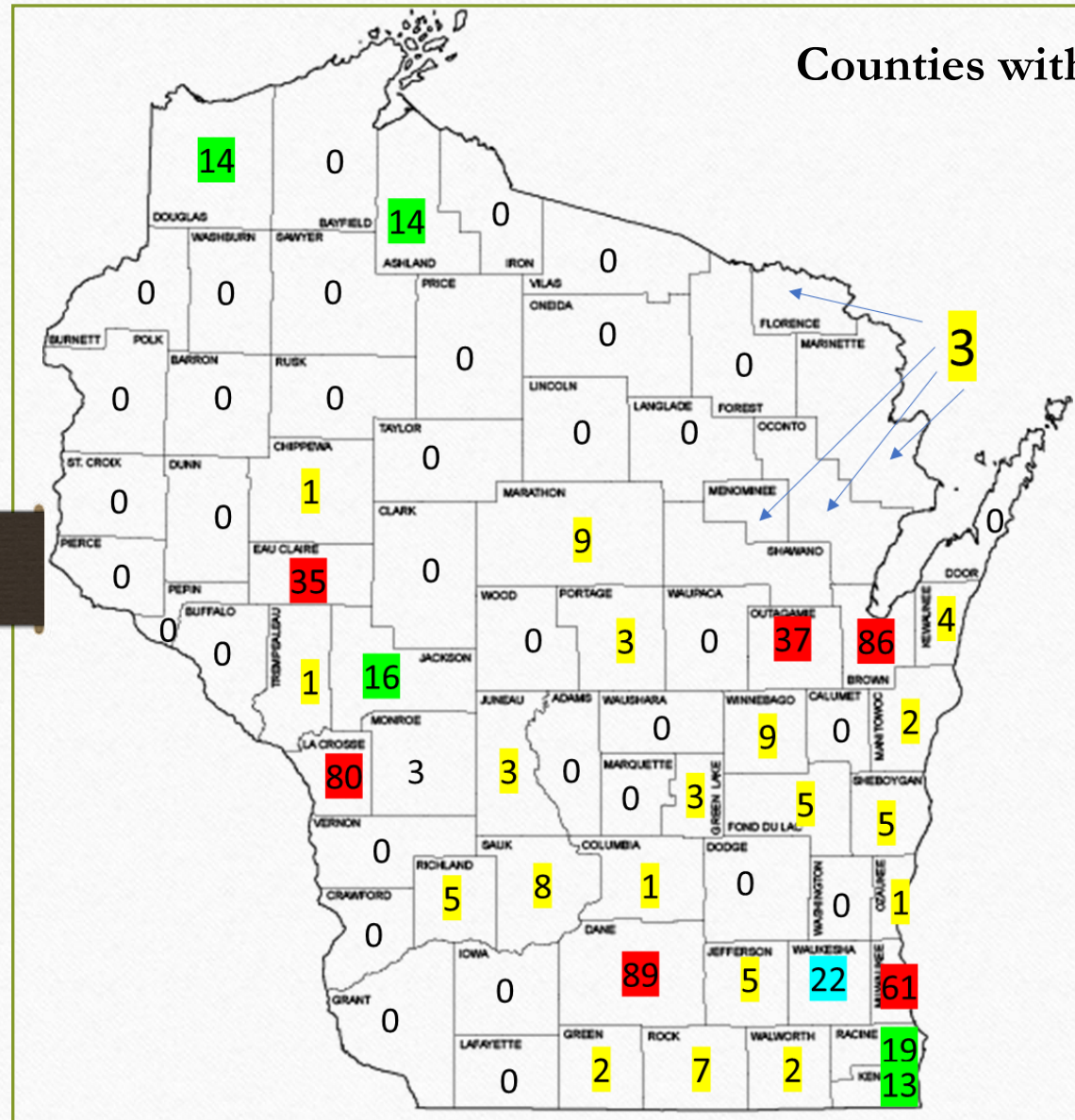
Waukesha

## 10-19 People

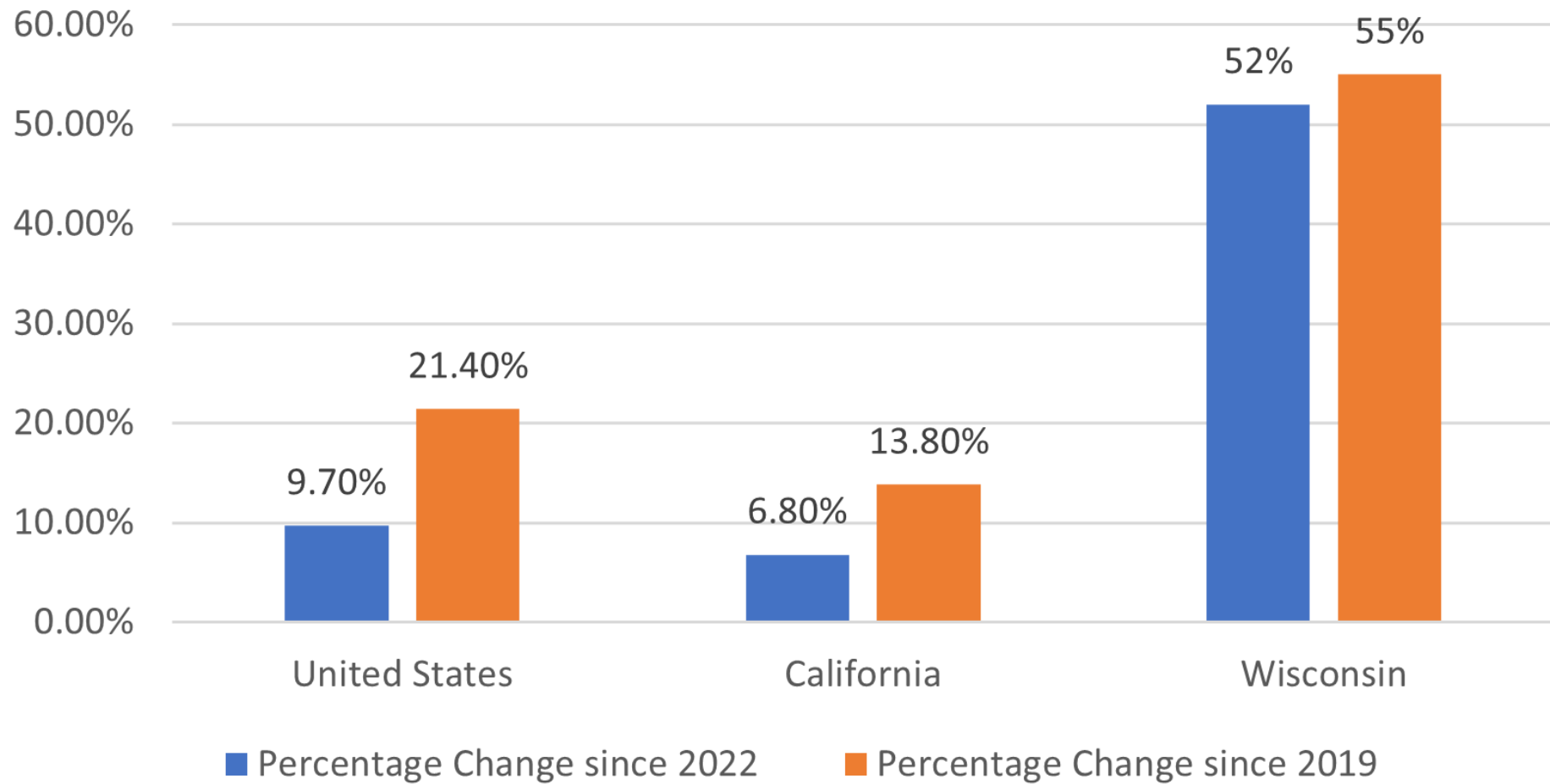
Ashland, Douglas, Jackson, Racine

## 1-9 People

Baron, Chippewa, Columbia, Dunn, Fond du Lac, Green, Green Lake, Juneau, Kewaunee, Lafayette, Manitowoc, Marathon, Monroe, Ozaukee, Portage, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Sawyer, Sheboygan, Taylor, Trempeleau, Walworth, Washington, Winnebago



## Growth of Unsheltered Homelessness - 2023





PACIFIC LEGAL  
FOUNDATION

---



Manhattan  
Institute

DISCOVERY  
INSTITUTE



CICERO  
INSTITUTE

*“I believe in Housing Fourth.”*

- Dr. Robert Marbut

# Features of Approach

- Barriers to entering shelter
- Emphasis on requiring treatment over sheltering/housing
- Increased criminalization of homelessness
- Introducing legislation in multiple states – including Wisconsin (AB 689/SB 669)

# *Grants Pass, OR vs. Johnson*

- Community just North of the border with California in Josephine County with a population of 39,194. That number represents an increase of 70% since 2020.
- Recent PIT counts about 600 people experiencing homelessness in Grants Pass. There are about 100 emergency shelter beds in Grants Pass.
- Oregon has a shortage of 102,760 rental homes affordable & available for Extremely Low-Income renters.
- Between 2018 and 2024, FMR for 2BR units increased by \$450 – about a 50% increase over 6 years.
- Case involves a local ordinance making sleeping outside illegal. People experiencing homelessness report receiving tickets after 5-day notices with several having received dozens of tickets.
- A ruling in favor of Grants Pass will nullify the legal precedent set by the *Martin vs. Boise, ID* set in the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Opposition to Grants Pass is based on 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment arguments. SCOTUS decision expected within one month.



- [InvisiblePeople.tv](http://InvisiblePeople.tv)
- USICH: “19 Strategies for Communities to Address Encampments Humanely and Effectively”
- HUD: “Proposed HUD Law Change Restores Fair Housing Guidelines Created in 2013 that Prohibit Discrimination”
- NAEH: “New Federal Funding Boosts Unsheltered Homelessness Response”
- NHLC: “Housing Not Handcuffs”



# Features of Approach

- Low-Barrier Sheltering
- Emphasis on Housing First solutions
- Increased investments in affordable housing construction
- Increased investments in homelessness prevention, housing case management, and other supportive services



# Michael Basford

Director

State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Homelessness

101 East Wilson Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53703  
<https://homelessness.wi.gov>

Phone: 608-266-3633  
[mike.basford@wisconsin.gov](mailto:mike.basford@wisconsin.gov)