

Family Shelter Team

Winter 2022-2023

Stepping Up

- Friday meetings facilitated by the City of La Crosse aimed at coordinating community efforts for unsheltered populations
- Focus on securing shelter space for the winter months
- Separate supports and intake process for adults and families
- Subgroup convened to create shelter plan for families
- Emergency plan for winter months only: November 1st – April 30th

Family Winter Shelter Plan

1

Create Single-Point of Entry

- Same location
- Same days/time
- Same team
 - Includes representation for all components of the process
- Distribute communication plan
- Intake – Assess – Assign – Deliver

2

Resource Identification

- WERA Funding – Couleecap
- La Crosse County – reallocated homeless prevention funds

3

Secure Agency Commitments

- Location and staff
- Intake and coordinated entry staff
- Funding sources and associated staff
- Case management staff
- School linkage onsite
- County linkage onsite
- Hotel partnerships

Communication Plan

Family Winter Sheltering Communication Plan for La Crosse County

This communication is the current communitywide response to family winter sheltering for families residing in La Crosse County. This plan is intended to address emergency shelter needs for families who are unsheltered or at imminent risk of becoming unsheltered. Family households must include at least one adult and one dependent minor.

If a family presents to your agency in need of emergency shelter between November 1, 2022 - April 30, 2023, let them know there is a family winter sheltering team that will be present every **Tuesday and Friday from 10:00am - 12:00pm at REACH Services and Resource Center, 212 11th St. South, La Crosse, (608)781-2783**. If the family has a place to stay and can wait to present until those days/times, assist the family with making sure they have a plan to get to REACH on Tuesday or Friday from 10:00am - 12:00pm.

To determine if the need is immediate:

Engage in the following conversation to help problem solve other temporary options:

Where did you stay last night or before you became unsheltered?

Do you have income that could contribute to a temporary stay somewhere?

Do you have a friend or family member who you could stay with, even for a few days until a better plan can be worked on or until the next Tuesday or Friday? Even if the family/friend doesn't live in this immediate area, schools can assist with transporting students to their school while they are staying out of the area.

Is there a safe family or friend who you would feel comfortable letting your child(ren) stay with while you look at options?

Are you fleeing a domestically violent situation?

If you are unable to secure funding for a motel or find an opening at a shelter today, where will you go tonight?

Is New Horizons an option? If so, call to see about openings.

Does your agency have funding to assist with temporary housing until the next Tuesday or Friday if they need shelter today?

If not, and the family needs housing TODAY, then call Isaac Hoffman at La Crosse County Human Services, (608)792-1617, during regular business hours to inquire about other options.

Inquire about other basic needs the family may be without such as food, clothing, blankets, etc., in addition to necessary transportation, and assist as much as possible.

Please Note: This is not an afterhours plan. The Salvation Army is not a family shelter option from November 1, 2022 - April 30, 2023, as they create space for other populations as part of the communitywide plan. Non-family households, adult individuals, needing emergency shelter should continue to access The Salvation Army Shelter and the Catholic Charities Warming Center. This is a response for emergency shelter only. Please continue to support and refer for general housing needs as you have in the past.

Family Shelter Team

Case Management	Andrew Storey	Couleecap
	Nancy Parcher	YMCA
	Tina Cannon	YMCA
	Emily Purvis	YMCA
	Tamara Zoerb	ILR
	Deb Dobrunz	LAFC/La Crosse County
	Heather Ideker	LAFC/La Crosse County
Funding	Dana Casberg	Couleecap
	Nicole Ellefson	Couleecap
	Isaac Hoffman	LAFC/La Crosse County
Coordinated Entry and Intake	Abbi Jeffers	Couleecap
	Megan Gruber	Couleecap
School Linkage	Alicia Place	School District of La Crosse
Site Support	REACH Staff	REACH/YWCA

Impact Report

- **86 Total Unduplicated Families Presented**
- 27 Families Diverted/Assessed to Other Places, Referred
- **59 Total Families Provided Emergency Shelter**
 - 28 Families Provided Emergency Shelter w/ WERA Funding
 - 31 Families Provided Emergency Shelter w/ Co. Funding
- 59 Total Families Provided Case Management
 - 36 Assigned New CM
 - 23 Retained Existing CM
- 7 Total Families Provided Rental Assistance w/ Co. Funding
 - More with WERA

Benefits for Families

- **Only had to go to one location:** clarity of process and how to access emergency shelter and associated supports
- **Efficient one-stop model:** assessment, case mgt, shelter determination and provision within 30 minutes, no bouncing around
- **Knowledgeable trauma informed staff:** less story telling, clear and consistent messaging and decision making, responsive
- **Streamlined support team formation:** eliminate unnecessary duplication
- Multiple hotel environments and locations: **Choice**

Benefits for Helpers

- **Saved Time!** Accomplished in minutes what at times took days
- **Community release of information:** allowed for efficient team formation, eliminated duplication, up-to-date and accurate information gathering, real time
- **Shared decision making:** consistent community decisions regarding shelter, informed decisions, not shouldered by one person or agency
- **Communitywide caseload management:** efficient use of resources, better helper to family ratio, improved worker wellness and longevity
- **Team approach:** strengthened relationships, boosted morale
- **Multiple Funding Sources:** flexible and broader application

Benefits for Organizations

Collective Impact

Fiscally Responsible Decision Making

Improved Employee Retention

Efficient

Reduced Agency Pressure: community-wide response exits

Improved Community Trust

Challenges

- Determining placement/custody
 - Not responsive to shared custody/placement
- Singular focus on unsheltered children
 - Difficult conversations about dividing families
 - Not coordinated with adult services
- Fiscal tracking
- High caseloads
- Not a Housing First Model: lack full array of shelter options
- Funding sources have expiration date
- Winter Plan has expiration date: **No Community Response Going Forward**
- Identifying residency
- Accommodations for large families
- Transportation to schools more challenging with scattered site motels

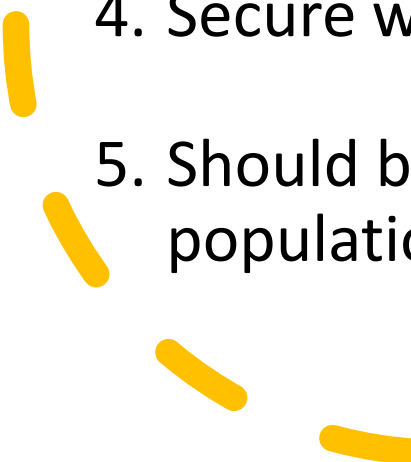
What Went Well

**NO KIDS WENT
UNSHELTERED
THIS WINTER!!!**

- Diverse skillsets of case managers
- Staff showing up
- Consistent decision-making
- Clear guidelines in decision making
- Clear expectations from community
- Community-wide diversion
- Avoided “ping-ponging” clients
- Initial one-on-one intake
- Walk-in times
- First point of contact was someone who knows resources and has intake knowledge
- Collaboration/communication in the community helped to learn accurate demand
- Identify a point person right away
- Everything happened in real time
- Clients received quick services
- Hotels responded quickly
- Scattered-site hotels
- Hotels were included as part of the process
- Team knew shelter bed space in real time in the community
- Larger part of community planning
- May not be the housing solution but is what we can do to aide immediate needs
- Shared accountability
- Staff worked well together
- REACH location and layout was excellent
- Saved time for all
- Communitywide ROI
- Multiple funding sources



Recommendations

1. Coordinated community-wide shelter intake for families going forward
 2. Coordinated case management and team formation
 3. Shelter organizations **MUST** be active part of team
 4. Secure wider array of family shelter options
 5. Should be used as a model for all housing related supports and populations (prevention, adults etc.)
- 

Next Steps

- Update community-wide communication plan
 - Distribute one-page communication before April 30th
 - Determine content and available resources
- Determine process to organize family shelter intake going forward
- Identify process for systemic strategy to end homelessness
 - Family Shelter Team proved concept but was an emergency winter plan