

Supportive Housing Institute and Initiative

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

Special Needs Housing: Combating Homelessness

HFA Staff Contact

Brenda Marquardt

brenda.marquardt@wheda.com

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Overview: WHEDA forms a Partnership with The Corporation for Supportive Housing

WHEDA recognized a significant need for assistance in Wisconsin's most vulnerable population who is experiencing homelessness in addition to needing support with challenges such as mental health, physical capabilities, and substance use recovery. To garner further knowledge and support, WHEDA partnered with The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) in February 2021 to launch an initiative to promote greater supportive housing developments in Wisconsin. The two organizations have since been working to connect developers and community service providers with the tools and resources needed to expand the supply of supportive housing. This collaboration has resulted in a four-part webinar series, a statewide survey, and a first-of-its-kind Wisconsin Supportive Housing Institute. This work represents an important part of WHEDA's efforts to cultivate an ecosystem of greater equity in affordable housing and economic opportunity throughout the State of Wisconsin.

Responding to an Important Need: An Increase in Homelessness in Wisconsin

Housing is critical to the health and wellness of individuals; however, far too many Wisconsin residents are not receiving the supportive services necessary to access safe, sustainable housing. Wisconsin is amongst the top 10 states experiencing homelessness in the U.S.; on any given day, more than 4,700 elderly residents, 2,100 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, 740 child welfare involved families, and 420 transitional-aged youth throughout the state are in need of supportive housing.

Supportive housing differs from other forms of housing because it combines the use of property management, housing, supportive services. Additional benefits of supportive housing include engagement of households facing multiple barriers, housing affordability, tenant resources, flexibility, volunteer services, and connections to the community for tenants. These added benefits allow individuals and families to use it as a tool for health, recovery, as well as personal and financial growth. WHEDA and CSH's partnership works to find the greatest areas of need for supportive housing in Wisconsin, identify why these needs are not being met, and provide developers with the training and resources necessary to create greater affordable housing with supportive services for individuals experiencing homelessness.

WHEDA and CSH Provide Training, Research, and Institutional Education to Benefit Developers

WHEDA and CSH worked together to provide a strategic three-part model to advance supportive housing specifically for the residents of Wisconsin. To kick off the supportive housing initiative, a four-part webinar series was offered to connect and educate developers, community service providers, and other housing professionals on the basics of supportive housing, integrated housing models, supportive services, and property management. Each 90-minute interactive webinar was offered to individuals free of cost. The first webinar in the series provided an overview of supportive housing, while other sessions targeted integrated housing models and supportive service delivery. The sessions included content to

help build understanding of the racial disparities and institutional barriers that affect housing for people facing the debilitating challenges of homelessness, disability, and poverty. In total, there were over 400 webinar attendees.

In addition to the training opportunities, WHEDA and CSH conducted a statewide survey to better understand the areas of greatest need for supportive housing in addition to the biggest challenges in meeting those needs. More than 260 Wisconsin housing professionals and community stakeholders responded to the survey. Key findings included:

- 75% saw a need for more supportive housing
- 37% plan to develop, or are in the process of developing supportive housing
- 77% saw supportive housing as part of their organizational mission
- 63% are not planning to develop supportive housing or already have a supportive housing development project in process

In response to the survey results, WHEDA and CSH launched the inaugural Wisconsin Supportive Housing Institute. In February 2022, seven teams made up of diverse Wisconsin professionals were chosen to work closely with WHEDA and CSH through 80 hours of targeted training, technical assistance, and group exercises. Content shared in the Institute will better prepare and equip housing partners to develop greater supportive housing developments in communities across Wisconsin.

The Institute will culminate in the summer of 2022, when teams present their development plans to a group of public and private investors. After graduating from the Institute, each lead organization will be better prepared to apply for State and Federal Tax Credits through WHEDA's [Housing Tax Credit Program](#). In the most recent [Qualified Allocation Plan](#), the threshold for designated supportive units was reduced from 50% to 25%, thereby making it possible for more projects to qualify.

A Replicable Model: CSH is a National Leader in Supportive Housing

CSH is a national leader in supportive housing, so this program idea is not completely unique to Wisconsin. State Housing Authorities can use WHEDA's partnership with CSH as a model to better serve the most vulnerable residents in their own communities. CSH has the skillset and resources to work with each State Housing Authority to determine the best plan to fit each community's supportive housing needs.

Creating a Lasting Impact on Wisconsin's Most Vulnerable Population

Through the use of supportive housing training webinars, a statewide survey, and the Supportive Housing Institute, WHEDA and CSH are addressing homelessness in Wisconsin by providing supportive housing partners with the resources they need to navigate this often-complex form of housing. Those experiencing homelessness are not able to achieve a strong quality of life until they receive access to housing along with the necessary resources to stay permanently housed. WHEDA is working to provide innovative solutions to help advance the quality of life for all Wisconsin residents. Through this partnership, WHEDA and CSH are aiming to prevent and end homelessness.

Appendix A

Supportive Housing Resources and Information

WHEDA [Supportive Housing](#) Webpage

- Includes state survey results, webinars, press releases, and other resources

[WHEDA Stories: A Boost for Supportive Housing in Wisconsin](#)

Appendix B

Visual Aids



Figure 1: Supportive Housing Survey Results

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Image 1: The 2022 Supportive Housing Institute members toured three Supportive Housing developments in Milwaukee- Highland Commons, United Methodist Children's Services, and Thurgood Marshall Apartments



Image 2: The 2022 Supportive Housing Institute members tour Thurgood Marshall Apartments



Image 3: Supportive Housing Institute members engage with Katrina Van Valkenburgh, CSH Managing Director