

# WISCONSIN COALITION AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

## WINTER 2016 NEWSLETTER

**ADVOCACY WITH STATE OFFICIALS:** WCAH Staff and Board members continue to meet with staff from the Office of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor on issues surrounding homelessness in Wisconsin. These are on-going conversations and we are both encouraged and hopeful that there will continue to be some movement in a positive direction that supports WCAH's efforts to address homelessness in Wisconsin.

**WCAH ADVOCACY AROUND DECEMBER COLD SNAP:** With severely cold temperatures in play in December, 2015, WCAH issued requests to municipal officials to provide warming rooms to keep the homeless safe. In the City of Milwaukee, WCAH's advocacy prompted Mayor Tom Barrett to support the opening of an additional warming site for homeless families.

**POLITICAL MAPPING PROJECT:** WCAH has completed the "Balance of State" portion of this initiative. 45 non-profit homeless providers responded to the survey, providing WCAH with critical information such the listing of State Representatives and Senators that represent their areas and the knowledge base of those legislators in regard to homelessness issues. The information will be invaluable to the legislative advocacy program of WCAH, as we will be able to engage local providers and promote their involvement in our state-wide efforts. WCAH plans to extend this initiative in future months to both the Madison and Milwaukee areas.

**YOUTH SUMMIT ON HOMELESSNESS:** WCAH staff is working with local partners in Dane County to explore the possibility of bringing young people into the discussion about homelessness by way of a youth summit on homelessness. More to come!

**RECENT PRESENTATIONS:** WCAH staff, Joe Volk, and Board Member Sue Wallinger were workshop panelists and presenters at WISCAP's "*Poverty Matters*" Conference in November, 2015. In addition, WCAH staff have been invited to be part of a panel in an upcoming process to update Dane County's 10 Year Plan to end homelessness.

**SOCIAL IMPACT BONDING:** WCAH staff and Board members are engaged in on-going conversations with officials from WHEDA to advocate for the establishment of a social impact bonding program in Wisconsin. WCAH's goal is to convince WHEDA of the advantages social impact bonding programs are able to offer in supporting new homeless services.

**PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:** On January 28th a "Point in Time" count of homeless persons was taken across the United States which included many Wisconsin localities. This count largely records persons living on the street or in emergency homeless shelters. The information gathered promises to be helpful in guiding homeless programming across Wisconsin. WCAH will also use the data to as we craft our advocacy efforts over the next twelve months.

Unfortunately, Point in Time surveys largely miss homeless families with children. Families tend to find some secretive place to get off the street; often in locations that are dangerous and not fit for human habitation.

There are alternative ways to measure the impact of homelessness on families. For example, Coordinated (Homeless Shelter) Access projects routinely record monthly contacts by hundreds of families that seek shelter but are turned away due to a lack of space. Even after in depth screening of need, the waiting list in Milwaukee often exceeds 250 families each month. Information from that tool should be included as part of the Point in Time survey. In addition, Wisconsin school districts participate in a national count of homeless students. This method of counting shows that over 19,000 students in Wisconsin schools experience homelessness sometime during the school year.

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Homelessness strongly believes that all indicators of homelessness must be used as part of the process of allocating resources to alleviate homelessness. WCAH will be vigilant in gathering a comprehensive set of data to guide its advocacy efforts that will be shared with decision makers across the State.

**BOARD MEMBER PROFILE-SUE WALLINGER:** Sue Wallinger is a Grants Administrator for the City of Madison Community Development Division. Her primary responsibility is to work with nonprofit agencies that provide homeless services as well as entities that focus on the creation of permanent, supportive housing units. Sue has over 20 years of experience and has worked with homeless individuals as direct service provider, determines funding levels for and monitors programs that serve the homeless and has spearheaded the development of Madison's HUD Continuum of Care homeless application. In addition, Sue manages over \$1 million of City of Madison and State funds and oversees over 30 contracts for homeless services and housing creation. Sue has been instrumental in the development and implementation of the first coordinated entry system in Dane County and the first City/County funded permanent supportive housing project, which will create 60 units of housing for chronically homeless and homeless veterans. This new housing option is expected to open in the spring of 2016.

We value Sue's experience and input into WCAH's mission!!!

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