

**Leadership Council on Early Years Virtual Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
DRAFT Pending Approval**

February 21, 2024  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**YouTube Link for Observers:** <https://youtube.com/live/WbQ93mXfvoY?feature=share>

**Members Present:** Emilie Amundson (Secretary, DCF), Ashley Andre (Policy Initiatives Advisor, DATCP), Peter Barca (Secretary, DOR), Kathy Bilek (Legislative Liaison, DOT), Kathy Blumenfeld (Secretary, DOA), Jessica Boling (Assistant Deputy Director, WHEDA), Kevin Carr (Secretary, DOC), Linda Hall (Director, OCMH), Julie Majerus (Environmental Justice Policy Advisor, DNR), Rebecca Murray (Executive Director, CANPB), Cheryl Olson-Collins (Secretary, DFI), Sarah Valencia (Assistant Deputy Secretary, DHS)

**Others Present:** Cara Conners (Legislative Liaison, DOA), Kate Constalie (Legislative Liaison, WEDC), Arielle Exner (Legislative Liaison, DWD), Jared Hoy (Deputy Secretary, DOC), Sara Knueve (Policy Initiatives Advisor, DPI), Amy Millard (Deputy Administrator, DVA), Angela Miller (Policy Director, DHS), Cari Reddington (Administrator, Division of Research and Policy, DOR), Stephanie Weix (Governor's Office)

**Welcome**

- DCF Secretary Amundson started the meeting at 10:00 AM.
  - Secretary Amundson recognized that many folks would have to hop in and out of the meeting due to other priorities and meetings.
- Shared that LCEY is a connection point that shows how, across the enterprise, we support children and families.
  - At times, we need to take a look through a different lens at things that we may not always consider benefit children and families.
- Today we will be discussing housing.
  - Key factor and bedrock of what it looks like when families are well and stable in housing.
  - Looking at children and families through the housing lens.
  - Conversation around housing feels hopeful and that there may be some space for bipartisanship.
  - For all of these reasons, feels like it's a good time to talk about housing.
- Secretary Amundson shared that we will be moving the approval of minutes to later in the meeting when more folks have joined.
- Secretary Amundson did roll call.

## Welcome and Agency Housing Discussion

### Agency Housing Overview Discussion

- Secretary Amundson shared that housing has been an important topic.
- Thanks to Governor for redistributing ARPA funds to assist with housing needs.
- Last meeting, Mauston Dream Up! panel shared challenges in their community around housing and child care.
  - We hear these echoes throughout the state.
- Secretary shared research around housing done at Harvard.
  - Landmark Place Matters Study underscores how critical all aspects of housing are for helping families to thrive.
  - All families deserve safe, affordable housing that's free from crime, environmental toxins, and housing that offers safe places to play and recreate in a community that provides support and resources for families.
    - Community around the house is truly what matters.
  - Access to opportunities, grocery stores, transportation, libraries, and other places that better assist families to thrive are important.
  - Research shows that when we meet the wide range needs related to housing, children and families do better socially and emotionally.
  - Housing connected to the social determinants of health.
- Secretary Amundson shared information from another report, the Princeton University Eviction Lab.
  - Showed that the highest rates of eviction are for young children between birth and five years old.
    - Instability comes at most crucial time in a child's development.
    - For female and African American female heads of household, disparities were even more stark.
  - Children experiencing homelessness experience more emotional and behavioral issues, increased risk of serious health problems, may be more likely to be separated from families, and may experience more school mobility, repeat a grade, be expelled, drop out of school, or have lower overall academic performance.
- Today, we will explore many facets of housing and housing stability, and how to connect dots across housing across the agencies.
  - Holistic address housing and discussions around housing.
  - So many environmental factors are the difference-makers. Understanding connection between place and housing.
  - Connection between place and overall added benefits of housing.
- Will go around to discuss how agencies work to secure stable housing.
  - Shared that we all play different roles, and all have different strengths to help with this issue.
- Opportunity to hear from Office of Children's Mental Health about impact of housing instability in mental health and social determinants.

- Will hear about three agencies and how we are providing safe and affordable housing.
  - Takes all of us together to meet the range of needs that families and communities need and we all play different roles.

**DCF:** Secretary Amundson shared that DCF has a couple of programs that support housing instability, prevent homelessness, and work to assist those affected by housing instability.

- DCF provides Home Visiting and Head Start programs.
  - Home Visiting tailors and supports family needs in their home and Head Start provides early education and additional range of services including early education and support for families.
- Together with other agencies, also supports community action programs (CAP) throughout state with a range of resources to prevent housing instability and support those who may become homeless.
  - CAP agencies are a critical piece of the puzzle and are the grassroots of community action.
- DCF has economic support programs through Wisconsin Works (W2) program.
- Wisconsin Shares and YoungStar are other programs and resources that assist families seeking quality child care.
- Child Support is also a critical resource, particularly for single-parent households.
- Emergency Assistance is another resource that can be used for an array of needs for family stability including housing assistance for eligible families.
- WisTAF is another resource, which is a legal assistance program that helps to offset legal costs for families.
  - Since 2022, more than 300 families have received support to help with housing-related issues like eviction, landlord-tenant negotiation, or barriers to other housing instabilities.
- Provide shelter and support for Homeless Youth programs.
  - DPI data shows about 19,000 youth faced homelessness at some point during the 2022-23 school year.
- Support youth who are aging out of the foster care system and need independent living services.
  - These youth have heightened risk for housing instability and homelessness.
- Also support for families affected by domestic violence through 62 contract agencies that provide a range of support to keep families safe.
  - Often involves finding and maintaining safe housing.
  - Received initial report of a 5-year demonstration program providing a housing-first approach to families affected by domestic violence.
    - This approach is being piloted in 9 communities in rural and urban parts of the state.
    - UW study team visited all 9 sites in summer 2023 and identified barriers and protective factors to using the DVHF funds.

- Key findings included that after rent and security deposit, housing was described as a critical need in both rural and urban communities.
  - Some sites used the program as eviction prevention and violence prevention.
  - Some sites used funds for legal aid, which made a significant impact in custody and case outcomes that positively affected clients.
    - Most reported that the funds helped staff with burnout, as they could support more people effectively.
    - Participants shared feedback of the program and one said that the program saved their life and helped them reunite with their kids. Another said that the support kept them and their children off the streets and from exposing their kids to more domestic violence.
- Family Keys Program
  - Small pilot project to demonstrate that helping families stabilize housing and other needs will lead to less removals of children due to child welfare concerns.
    - Became very interested in this during pandemic when ARPA efforts had an undeniable effect on fewer removals in the child welfare system.
  - Program is currently operating in 3 counties.
  - Provides a range of economical supports including housing and a community-wide team of individuals who help identify and provide services.
  - Seeing success in reducing child removals and in one county, 38 kids were prevented from entering or re-entering out-of-home care.
  - Successfully reunified 3 children into a Family Keys House.
  - Role of housing preventing removal is emerging research.
  - Fewer removals also saves money.
    - According to one partner agency, the program could allow them to spend less to save more, and from their calculations, preventing removals saves over \$377,000 in out of home care costs.
  - County teams report that more organizations are coming to the table with projects, including property owners and landlords.
  - Counties are exploring landlord risk mitigation funds and other ways to increase likelihood that owners would be willing to rent to families with challenging rental histories or experiencing temporary moments of crisis.
  - Most common barriers to participants in program include child care, transportation, and lack of steady income.
    - Excited about work related to housing but know there are many other critical pieces of the puzzle.
- Governor shared in State of the State the importance of affordable housing.

- Critical part of making sure that Wisconsin is prepared to meet the needs of the workforce.
- Highlighted importance to build more affordable housing across the state.
- Secretary Amundson asked that others in meeting share what their agencies are doing around housing, aside from the agencies that will be presenting later in the meeting.

**DATCP:** Ashley Andre shared an update from Bureau of Consumer Protection.

- Landlord tenant issues were highest number of complaints, and these increased last year with over 2,208 complaints.
  - Common issues are security deposit returns, eviction, unauthorized entry, inadequate disclosures, and unsatisfactory service.
- DATCP's website has landlord tenant resources.
  - Last year, received 60,000 visits to website for resources.
  - Encourage consumers and families to visit website to seek resources and file complaints if needed,

**DFI:** Secretary Olson-Collins shared that they are a regulatory agency, so not doing same type of work, but do work on consumer protection and elder abuse in securities area.

- Regulate state banks and credit unions and financing of homes.
  - They do a lot of work within communities for things like with home ownership and showing folks how to apply for loans.
  - Secretary visited Milwaukee this week and shared information about a credit union that is helping the Hispanic Community.

**DNR:** Julie Majerus shared that DNR is ensuring that places where children and families live are safe and healthy.

- Remediation Redevelopment Program is part of several programs that ensure that buildings are safe when being considered for housing or child care.
- Some of the other programs are:
  - In collaboration with DCF and DHS, the Choose Safe Places Program helps child care providers keep kids safe from toxic chemicals and environmental hazards.
    - Provides free consultations to prospective providers of licensed group and family centers.
    - Helps with determining if leftover chemicals from past uses of the site that have moved onto site may be of concern.
  - Vapor Intrusion for Local Government webpage to provide tools and resources for local governments to address vapor intrusion in their communities.
    - Includes information on locating contaminated sites that are being considered for development or redevelopment.
      - Helps ensure housing redevelopments are done safely.

- Received federal funding to conduct inventory of sites that are likely to pose a high risk for vapor intrusion.
      - Strong focus on identifying former dry cleaner sites and other sites with use of TCE.
      - Funding will also be used to do an assessment of properties to determine if vapor intrusion issues exist in several underutilized or abandoned properties.
- Getting the Lead out of drinking water pipes in homes.
  - Bipartisan infrastructure law allows DNR to provide funding to communities.
  - Received applications from 37 municipalities requesting around \$75 million in funding.
  - \$30 million of the funding was allocated for city of Milwaukee.
  - All applicants were awarded full amount they were eligible for.
  - Anticipate executing these awards in March.
- Providing inventory related technical assistance targeting small system in state first.
- One of four states participating in EPA's lead service line replacement accelerator pilot.

**DOC:** Deputy Secretary Jared Hoy shared some of the things they are working on at DOC that intersect with issues around housing.

- Have juvenile services, and given smaller number of youth served, throughout state have intensive case management and collaboration with local counties, DHS, and DCF to find placements for kids.
- Adult side also relates to children of incarcerated parents.
  - Ongoing challenge at re-entry point once people are existing prisons, coming back into the community, and DOC is doing its best to find safe and reliable housing for those folks.
    - Significant budget (around \$5 million a year) for resources for those who may be facing homelessness, which in turn, helps their children.
  - Continue to look for more resources and collaboration with local communities.
    - Can be complicated depending on ordinances and types of crimes folks are convicted of. Can make it difficult to find housing.
      - This has a direct impact on kids.
- Looking for ways to make sure that there are opportunities for incarcerated folks to connect with their kids and families and planning for release.
  - Engaging in discussion with all correctional facilities and looking at what the visitation experience is like and to make sure it is as kid-friendly as possible. Want to provide avenues and opportunities for parents to spend longer time with children.

- Want to give them the opportunity to discuss what living arrangements will look like when mom or dad gets home.
- Reached out to National Institute of Corrections
  - Looking for technical assistance to enhance for visiting areas. Will translate into a smoother and more stable environment as folks are being released into the community.

**DOR**: Cari shared that as we come upon tax season, DOR participates in volunteer income tax assistance for low-income individuals.

- There are credits for low-income individuals such as Homestead Credit, Earned Income Tax Credit.
  - Proactively reach out to folks who may be eligible for credits.
- Secretary Barca shared that it appears likely that legislature will pass an upgraded child care credit. Enthusiastic about this progress and this was one of Governor Evers' top priorities.

**DOT**: Kathy Bilek shared that DOT sees that their projects do have housing impacts and want to make sure these projects are considering those impacts. Want to cause as little damage as possible.

**DPI**: Sara Knueve shared that DPI assists with children experiencing homelessness.

- Shared that in the last school year, over 18,000 students were identified as experiencing homelessness.
  - Have homeless liaisons in every school to help identify students.
  - In early learning space working, through the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaboration, have a staff member who supports in the 4k space.
- Stable housing sets students up for success and allows for long term benefits for students.

**DVA**: Amy Millard shared that they assist veterans every day and provide benefits including housing for those who are eligible.

- Have two specific programs that deal with homeless veterans which includes the Veterans Outreach Recovery Program and the Veteran Housing and Recovery Program.
- Work with counties, nonprofits, federal government to help meet the needs of each veteran. Often combine multiple sources of funding to help one individual.
  - Also help with mental health, substance abuse issues, and suicide prevention.

**DWD**: Arielle Exner shared that housing is one of the top barriers to folks entering and staying in the workforce.

- Grateful for ARPA funds that allowed for Governor Evers to create the Workforce Solutions Initiative, a \$158 million investment.

- Flexibility with ARPA funds allowed DWD to create local solutions to address some workforce barriers including housing, child care, and transportation.
- Highlighted one workforce innovation grant (WIG) program initiative in partnership with WEDC.
  - In Milwaukee County, Local Initiative Support Corporation received \$5 million in WIG funds to build around 50 affordable homes. These homes could be purchased by early education workers.
  - Another example under the Workforce Solutions Initiative, the Worker Connect Program will take place in the Green Bay and Milwaukee County Areas.
    - Navigators working with folks who have barriers to entering into the workforce.
    - Trying to meet folks where they are at like domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, and other places in the community.
    - Try to connect folks to a variety of services.
- Also highlighted DWD's Equal Rights Division, which is responsible for administering the State Open Housing Law to combat housing discrimination.
  - Saw 49 complaints in August, which was highest amount in a month last year.
  - Closely monitor and track these trends.

**CANPB:** Rebecca Murray shared that housing is a part of what they do in CANPB's Family Resource Centers.

- Shared that is it among the top three things families are looking for.
- In partnership with DPI, received funds for Family Navigator that work with homeless liaisons in the schools.
  - Helps out the liaisons, as they have somewhere to direct families in need to go for help.
  - This will be presented at the next CANPB board meeting.

### **OCMH Presentation - Impact of Housing Stability on Families with Young Children**

- Linda Hall shared that OCMH is pleased to have opportunity to share how housing insecurity and child wellbeing relate to one another.
- Mentioned that Amy Marsman, Senior Research Analyst is available in the chat to answer questions that arise.
- Provided a background of what OCMH does.
  - Have two goals, which include improving the system of children's mental health, integrating efforts across agencies, and to follow data points.
  - Attached to the Governor's Office and served administratively by DHS.
  - Consider target group ages 0-26.
    - Today's presentation will focus on 0-5 age group.
- Provided a fact sheet on housing instability.

- Noticed widespread evidence that housing stability impacts overall wellbeing for children.
- Effects everything from child development, school performance, employment, child care, child welfare, and health care costs.
  - Health care costs for those who are unhoused or have housing insecurity costs health system more because they are more likely to visit the ER.
  - Also hear frequently from educators that housing instability is a huge problem for so many children they work with.
- In 2023 annual report, highlighted housing instability as a key stressor for families.
  - Research shows that families are mainly stressed by financial insecurity, which directly impact parents' ability to provide stable housing, healthy food, and good child care.
- Stable housing impact all facets of children's lives.
  - Research shows that the youth who live in stable housing have better mental and physical health, better school attendance and academic performance, and improved earnings in adulthood.
  - Experience fewer family separations, have fewer behavioral problems, reduced contact with school discipline and criminal justice, and reduced suicidality.
- Housing instability and housing insecurity are terms that are used interchangeably.
  - Refers to a range of living situations including temporarily staying at a friend's or relative's housing, sleeping in a family car, and living in shelters or on the streets.
  - Also includes moving from home to home, poor heating and cooling and exposure to toxins in the home such a lead poisoning.
  - Has an impact on physical, cognitive, and behavioral development.
- Severe housing is one type of housing insecurity, and is a measure of households with at a least 1 of 4 housing problems, including high costs, lack of kitchen and plumbing facilities, and overcrowding.
  - Seven counties in Wisconsin exceed the state average in sever housing rates.
    - Milwaukee and Menominee Counties both exceed the national average of 17%.
    - In Milwaukee, 1/5 of all homes are considered to be in the severe housing rate.
- Home ownership
  - Stark racial disparities to home ownership, and data shows that racial disparities have widened in the past ten years.
    - White home ownership is nearly triple that of Black home ownership.

- Other data shows increase in home ownership for Hispanic families, but not for Black families.
- Housing assistance
  - Affordable housing and housing assistance lead to better outcomes for kids, but only ¼ of eligible households receive this type of assistance.
  - Recently, families with children receive a smaller share of housing vouchers and fell from 58% to 46% in the United States.
    - In Wisconsin, it's an even lower percentage at 44%.
- Evictions
  - Children are most impacted by evictions.
  - OCMH looks at intergenerational effects of difficult access to social determinants of health and the impact of generational trauma.
  - Renters living with children are at a higher risk (two times the rate) of eviction than those living without children.
  - Early childhood evictions
    - Study from Rutgers, Princeton, and the Census Bureau found that the most common age to experience the threat of eviction is between ages 0 and 5.
  - Eviction inequity
    - While Black Americans in the U.S. make up 18% of renter population, yet they make up 51% of renters who are threatened with eviction and 43% of those who were actually evicted.
    - White Americans make up just over half of all renters, yet they account for only 26% of those threatened with eviction and 32% of those evicted.
    - About a quarter of Black babies and toddlers face this housing insecurity during critical years of development.
    - Black households are by far most likely to face threats of eviction or be evicted.
    - The second highest group is Native American Youth.
      - 70% of Native Americans in the U.S. live in urban areas and highest concentration of Native American Youth in Wisconsin is in the Milwaukee area.
- Early Childhood Homelessness
  - Infancy is the age when a person is most likely to live in a HUD shelter and about half of children in HUD homeless shelters are under the age of six.
  - Noted that the legislature voted yesterday to make homelessness a crime, and OCMH believes this will have a compounding effect on what we are already seeing.
- Homeless in Wisconsin
  - Black and Tribal students are far more likely to be homeless than white students.
    - Over 7% of Black students, 6% of Tribal students, and less than 1% of white students experience homelessness. In all cases, children

- of color are more likely than white kids to be homeless in Wisconsin.
- Lasting impact of homelessness
  - Dramatic and traumatic impact on kids and has major effects on children's development.
  - Effects last for years and can impact children into adulthood.
  - Added that primary focus related to children's mental health is to examine issues is so that kids feel like they belong in their school and community.
    - Family moving multiple times in short period of time disrupts kids' ability to feel like they belong which is essential to wellbeing.
  - 7 in 10 homeless students are chronically absent from school.
    - Homeless kids in other state are attending school more often.
  - Wisconsin Attorney Carousel Bayrd found that social connections are a major factor in kids who get in trouble.
    - Kids that do not have a social network, don't have friends, and don't have connections, things that are essential to wellbeing.
    - Even planned moves from one stable home to another can be challenging because they disrupt children's social connections.
- Financial survival in WI
  - Financial stability is critical to staying housed. Number of households facing financial hardship is undercounted by official poverty measures.
    - In Wisconsin 11% of households were in poverty in 2021, but another 23% were ALICE.
    - ALICE = Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed
      - Measure that is tracked by United Way in the United States.
      - ALICE Households have working adults who are above FPL but do not have enough to afford basics for families.
      - In Wisconsin, this is 1/3 of households and if often made up of essential workers.
    - Disparities between groups: Group with most financial hardship include young adults, especially young mothers, households with children led by single females, and Black, Hispanic, and Native households.
  - Basic Needs
    - During pandemic, ARPA funds were distributed to help people buy food and child tax credits. Those supports are now gone.
    - Estimated for every \$100 families receive, they spend it mostly on food, shelter, and clothing.

- After receiving ARPA funds, federal poverty rate dropped from 22% to 5%.
    - Demonstration of what it takes to reduce number of kids in poverty in the U.S.
    - Documented evidence that when we give families money, they spend it on things we'd want them to spend it on.
- Policies and Programs that Improve Housing and Stability
  - Solutions include supportive housing, quality, affordable child care, feeding kids, financial stability, access to mental health and substance abuse treatment, school belonging.
    - OCMH looks at school mental health where a majority of kids who need treatment get it.
    - Need immediate response on these issues and OCMH is focusing on what we all can do to make a difference.
- Secretary Amundson thanked Linda for the presentation and shared that when we keep families safe, supported, and protected, there is an undeniable impact on the success of kids.
  - While housing is an adult issue, we cannot delink these conversations from conversation around children.
  - Investing in families invests in children and their future outcomes.
- Secretary Amundson shared that meeting minutes will be approved in the next meeting in order to allow time for the next two presentations.
- Introduced Jessica Boling from Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) and Kenna Arvold from DOA, Director, Bureau of Housing, Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources, and Sarah Valencia, Assistant Secretary at DHS.
  - Will share how each agency is addressing the housing situation.

### **Panel Presentation – Department Approaches to Housing**

#### **Jessica Boling, Deputy Assistant Director, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)**

- WHEDA was created around 50 years ago and was created to finance affordable housing.
  - Now at different point in history and are experiencing a housing crisis.
  - Want someone to be the backbone in leading the state in housing.
- Moving into problem-solving and tackling the housing crisis.
  - Creating a housing and research data department and publishing a housing plan for the state.
    - First statewide comprehensive housing plan that's existed.
    - Will look at the impact of housing when it comes to children, family, and residents of WI as well as long-term outcomes.

- WHEDA is quasi-governmental and are a self-sustaining entity, but did receive money from workforce bill package mentioned earlier.
- Recently update mission, vision, and priorities
  - Mission: help WI thrive by expanding access to affordable housing choices.
  - Vision: All people in Wisconsin have an affordable place to call home.
  - Strategic Priorities: Put people first; do what only we were created to do; protect housing as a core human need.
- Who WHEDA serves.
  - Low-to-moderate income households in Wisconsin.
    - 30-80% of median income.
  - Examples of low-to-moderate income in counties
    - \$123,400 is median income in Dane County (\$98,720 falls into low-to-moderate category.)
    - Not always what people think of as low to moderate income.
- What WHEDA Does
  - Provide mortgages to homebuyers.
  - Administer federal and state housing tax credit programs to create affordable rental buildings.
    - Exists because market right now makes it impossible to create affordable housing with a subsidy, which comes in the form of federal and state housing tax credits.
  - Provide commercial financing products to support housing and economic development strategies.
  - Grants and Services.
    - Monitor for compliance for all properties that receive state and federal housing tax credits to.
    - Vouchers.
    - Annual housing grant program through foundation.
      - Unique program because allows nonprofits who are providing short term housing to apply.
      - Allows for capital upgrades to buildings.
  - Are not a direct service entity and don't work with individuals.
    - Work through banks to provide mortgages and through developers to create the housing.
    - Switching to put more emphases on end users, or those getting mortgages and moving into the spaces.
- Scope of work
  - About 2.5 million households in Wisconsin and 1.5 million households with average family size of 3.
    - 98 thousand of those households live below the poverty line.
    - 293 thousand people live in less than \$23 thousand per year.
  - Moving toward moving issue of housing, starting to think of housing as everything.

- Where people live and type of housing determines many aspects of life including length and time of commute, access to affordable health food options, access to public transportation, access to jobs, access to daycare and quality schools, exposure to environmental hazards, and exposure to crime.
- Housing Insecurity Impacts
  - Want to use data to assist with creating better outcomes in the future.
- Financial Burden of Housing
  - General affordability rule that people should not spend more than 30% of household income on housing.
  - Median renter wage is \$18.47 per hour. Two-bedroom market-rate housing unit is \$1,690.
    - In this case, 57% of income would be spent on housing.
    - This is income that cannot go to other things like health care, which would have direct impacts on long term health incomes.
  - WI leads the Midwest with lowest income renters with extreme cost burdens.
- Provided examples of common careers and percent of wages going to housing.
- New Development in Madison – Andre Apartments
  - Supportive development for people with disabilities and that also has a child center. 100% affordable with 38 apartments and include all services.
- New Programs Available
  - Governor signed workforce housing bill package last year and put historical investment into housing with \$425 million into four programs that help housing be available to rent across the state.
  - Restore Main Street and Vacancy-to-Vitality focus on the development of new affordable units.
  - Home Repair & Rehab is for homeowners to be able to make updates to housing in the forms of grants and loans.

**Kenna Arvold, Department of Administration (DOA) Director of the Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources (DEHCR)**

- Who We Serve
  - Provide assistance to communities and low-and-moderate income individuals and families.
- Bureau of Affordable Housing is a bureau under DEHCR.
  - Goal to increase housing and to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing for low to moderate income individuals and families.
- Some Programs within Bureau of Affordable Housing
  - Rental Housing Development (RHD)
    - Take applications twice a year for construction and rehabilitation for 2 or more units.

- Funds go to developers, small scale property owners, Community Housing Developments (CHDOs), local governments, and public housing authorities.
  - Awards are \$1 million and funds must serve anyone below 60% of county median income.
  - Subject to affordability periods, meaning the housing must remain affordable for up to 20 years.
    - There are about 300 current projects subject to affordability periods.
- 1300 Main Residences, River Falls, WI
  - First Project in Wisconsin to renovate existing properties into affordable rental units with 0 greenhouse emissions.
    - Done with West CAP and Gerrard Corporation.
    - \$500k from DEHCR (HOME Funds)
    - 50 total units with 10 HOME units (5 at 50% and 5 at 30% County Median Income (CMI)).
  - Took collaboration from WHEDA and used tax credits.
  - Project received recognition throughout the state including Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity, Wisconsin Environment Initiative's highest scoring Green Built Affordable Housing Project, and the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor's Excellence in Community Action Award.
    - Many solar panels to create energy efficiency.
- The Meadows, Darlington, WI
  - First project in WI to combine USDA and LIHTC tax credits.
  - Units set aside for at least one person retired from agricultural industry, such as farm worker, trucking, or cheese production.
  - Did with SWCAP agency and Cinnaire Solutions.
  - Received \$987 thousand from HOME Funds.
  - 32 total units.
- Artist Lofts, Manitowoc, WI
  - Done with Impact Seven.
  - Project has 11 HOME units (6 at 50% and 5 at 30% CMI).
  - Done as a rehabilitation project.
  - Tax credits and CDBG Revolving Loan Funds.
- Homebuyer and Rehabilitation (HHR)
  - Provide funds for homebuyer assistance and repairs.
  - Recipients must be low to moderate income households at 80% or below area median income level. Receipt through loans or grants.
  - Must pass inspections to make sure it's decent, safe, and sanitary. HUD requires inspection of the home and fix everything to bring up to code.
  - Can be used for weatherization.
- Announcing the Launch of HOME ARP (American Rescue Plan)

- Investment for housing to qualifying populations.
- 30% CMI or at risk of homelessness.
- Nationally was \$5 billion of supplemental HOME funds for assistance to homeless and vulnerable populations.
- 70% of Units for Qualifying Populations have to be set aside.
- Allocated to WI.
- Target populations poverty and renters in poverty, homeless or at risk of homelessness, fleeing or attempting to flee domestic situations.
  - Homeless preference given priority.
  - Goal to provide 116 total units.
- State of WI received \$41 million.
- Applications are out now.
- Housing Accomplishments
  - Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program (WERA)
    - Started in December 2020 with \$25 billion in federal assistance to assist households.
      - WI Received \$386 million but some went to entitlements.
    - May 2021 Treasury announces another \$21.6 billion under American Rescue.
      - WI Received \$306 million, and some went to entitlements.
    - Total households served was 66,914 and over 21,000 were households with children.
    - DEHCR set money aside \$7 million for housing stability in September 2022.
      - Important as it allowed people to remain housed.
      - Money was given to CAP agencies across the state.
      - Case workers help with eviction, diversion, mediation, and serve as Case Management and Housing Navigators.
      - Have served 7,632 households.
  - Veterans Rental Assistance Program (VRAP)
    - December 2022, VRAP was announced as Governor's initiative.
      - \$2 million allocated for those at or below 80% CMI.
      - 602 Veteran households were served, and all funds were expended.
    - Additional \$1 million awarded to further assist WI veterans and this served additional 213 households.
    - Program has ended and funds have been expended.
  - Wisconsin Help for Homeowners (WHH)
    - March 2022, WHH provided close to \$70 million statewide.
    - Over 8,600 Wisconsin Households in all 72 counties in WI received average of \$8,438 in assistance.
    - Helped prevent foreclosure through mortgage, tax, and utility payments.

- Funds have been expended here, too.
  - Wisconsin Eviction Data Project
    - Produced by the Interagency Council on Homelessness.
    - Tracks eviction filing and judgements in Wisconsin on a monthly basis.
    - Provides weekly reports to Wisconsin Community Action Agencies to help them identify folks who may need housing stability services.
- Secretary Amundson share that these presentations can help show how agencies can cross pollinate and broadly communicate what is available to folks we work with and serve.

**Sarah Valencia, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Department of Health Services (DHS)**

- Two programs happening at DHS.
  - Lead Safe Homes Program that won a national award for innovation which:
    - Makes homes safe for low income and families by removing lead hazards.
    - Makes sure kids can grow up in homes that are lead safe, allows property owners to make homes lead safe, contractors to be trained and certified in lead safe work practices, and communities have improved older housing stock.
    - Program covers cost of lead-based paint hazard repairs.
    - Provide grants to local and regional community groups to run the program.
  - New Medicaid Benefit
    - Children's Health Insurance Program Housing Support Initiative was created. Wisconsin is first state to fund using CHIP funds, which are Medicaid funds.
    - Eligibility includes low-income families with children under age 19 and pregnant individuals.
    - Enrollment can come from referrals from community partners including schools, homeless shelters, managed care organizations, doctor's offices, hospitals, or any other local non-profit organization.
      - Agencies can also use an existing coordinated entry prioritization wait list and self-referral process to enroll eligible families.
    - Includes consultation to develop housing support program for families and includes assessment to identify family's preferences and barriers to housing like accessibility and affordability, developing a person-centered housing support plan based on the assessment, and then identifying other household needs including health care, transportation or child care.

- Supports families in transition into housing such as education on how to search for availability housing and identifying adequacy of transportation and addressing credit issues. Also help complete application for housing assistance and review lease or rental agreement while ensuring unit is safe and ready for move it.
- Includes relocation support to help facilitate transition into housing. Includes security deposits, utilities, home furnishings and services like pest eradication or one time cleaning prior to occupancy.
- Includes helping families sustain their housing such as education on rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords and conflict resolution.
- Connect individuals with resources based on housing support plan.
- Working with eight homeless assistance providers across the state to deliver this benefit.
  - Total amount of federal funds is \$734,000 and Contract lasts through April 2026.
- Started serving families in May of 2023 and served 160 families by end of 2023.
  - Average amount of time participant took to find housing while in program as 36 days.
  - All families remained housed throughout 2023.

### **Wrap-up and Next Steps**

- Secretary Amundson shared that she is excited to see how we can cross pollinate and amplify and connect dots.
- Will vote on meeting minutes next meeting.
- Meeting was ended at 12:00 PM.

*The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access this information in an alternate format, need it translated to another language, or need other accommodations, please contact Stacey Smith; phone 608-422-7078 or the Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711. For civil rights questions, call (608) 422-6889.*

Other resources:

[https://www.hud.gov/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/hud\\_no\\_24\\_010#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20%2D%20Today%2C%20the%20U.S.%20Department,vibrant%20communities%20and%20their%20residents](https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_24_010#:~:text=WASHINGTON%20%2D%20Today%2C%20the%20U.S.%20Department,vibrant%20communities%20and%20their%20residents)

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid/housing-supports.htm>

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/lshp.htm>