

2016 Annual Report

Milwaukee City/County Commission on Supportive Housing

The Milwaukee City/County Commission on Supportive Housing was formed in 2007 through actions of both the Milwaukee Common Council and the Milwaukee County Board. The Commission held its inaugural meeting in January 2008.

The enabling legislation established the following mission for the Commission:

...serve as a community infrastructure with the institutional commitment and the financial resources necessary for providing safe, affordable and accessible housing options with supportive services for persons with mental illness or other special needs. The commission shall establish goals and benchmarks for the effort to address housing needs for persons with mental illness and other special needs in the community, and monitor progress and hold the community accountable for meeting these goals.

Under the leadership of Chair Jim Tarantino, the commission met three times during 2015. Others who served on the Commission during 2016 are Suzanne Breier, vice chair; Ken Schmidt; Paula John; David Brown; Tony Perez; Steve Mahan; Matt Melendes; Jim Marks, and Ald. Khalif Rainey.

The Commission receives staff support from the Milwaukee Dept. of City Development and the Milwaukee County Housing Division.

Key supportive housing accomplishments in 2016

Thurgood Marshall Apartments

Thurgood Marshall Apartments, located in the 1900 block of N. 6th St., Milwaukee, opened its doors in October 2016, providing 24 permanent supportive apartments for individuals with substance abuse disorder. Wisconsin Community Services provides supportive services 24 hours/day at the building. It is hoped that the building will result in significant savings on services to homeless individuals who would otherwise be taken to detox by police.



A homeless outreach center is also planned for the building. It will provide a space to assess homeless individuals brought in by the Milwaukee Police Department's homeless outreach team. The building was developed by Cardinal Capital in partnership with Wisconsin Community Services and Milwaukee County. The building is named to honor the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who was able to rise above his own struggles with alcohol to leave an indelible mark on the nation's legal system.



St. Anthony Apartments

Low Income Housing Tax Credits awarded in 2016 will help to finance redevelopment of a former hospital building at 1004 N. 10th St. into St. Anthony Apartments. This 60-unit building, which is physically connected to St. Benedict's Church, will include a variety of facilities for individuals who participate in the daily St. Ben's meal program, such as showers, a laundromat, and a health clinic. A Milwaukee County Day Reporting Center for non-violent offenders will also be located at the building. Heartland Housing and St. Ben's are collaborating on the project; construction will begin in summer 2017.

Soldier's Home Apartments

Six vacant and underutilized buildings that are part of the Zablocki VA Medical Center complex will be transformed into 100 supportive housing units for veterans and their families. The project includes redevelopment of "Old Main," an 1869 building that was constructed to provide medical care for veterans of the Civil War.

When the apartments open in 2019, Milwaukee's Center for Veterans Issues will provide supportive services to residents, including education, job training and counseling.



Alexander Company was selected as the developer of the project through a competitive process operated by the Veterans Administration. The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, which previously developed a small supportive housing building for veterans on the Soldier's Home campus, will manage the development upon completion.



Clarke Square Apartments

A partnership between Cardinal Capital and Journey House will apply in 2017 for Low Income Housing Tax Credits to finance development of a 40-unit apartment building bordering Clarke Square Park, near S. 24th St. and W. Mineral St. The proposal includes up to 15 units of supportive housing for young adults who are aging out of foster care. Journey House would provide services to help these individuals become self-sufficient.

Partnership to End Chronic Homelessness

The Partnership to End Chronic Homelessness, announced by County Executive Chris Abele and Mayor Tom Barrett in June 2015, provides significant resources to address the needs of individuals whose circumstances meet the federal definition of chronic homelessness. These individuals generally have a disability and have lived continuously for a significant period of time in a shelter or a place not meant for human habitation, such as an outdoor encampment or a vacant building.

The Partnership, which pools resources from Milwaukee City and County government and the City and County public housing authorities, follows the “housing first” model. This concept posits that the lack of a permanent place to live is the single most important problem that must be solved for homeless individuals.

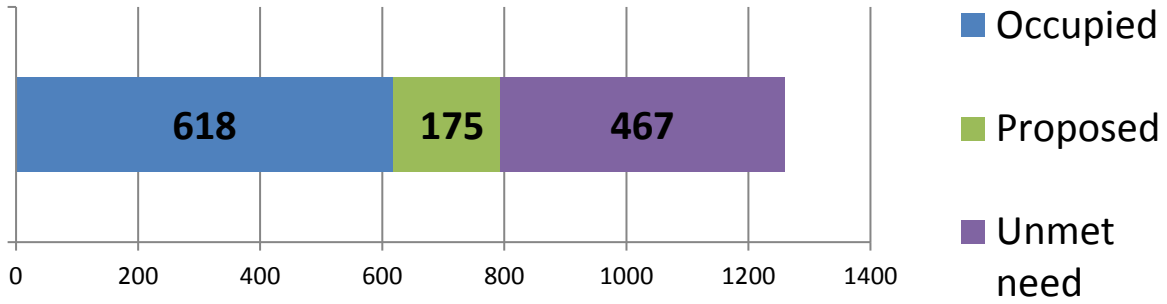
Over time, Milwaukee County will identify a number of small apartments that can provide housing for up to 300 chronically homeless individuals identified by a County outreach team and the Milwaukee Police Dept. Rent support for these individuals is supplied by rent vouchers issued by the City and County housing authorities, along with City HOME funds. Housed individuals are offered case management services provided by non-profit agencies including the Salvation Army, Guest House, Hope House, Community Advocates and Pathfinders for Youth.

By the end of 2016, 175 chronically homeless individuals had been housed and voluntarily accepted case management services. 99% of the individuals who have been housed to date are still in their apartments.

For more information, consult the initiative’s web site: www.housingfirstmilwaukee.com.

Supportive housing scorecard for 2015

Milwaukee County's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, published in 2010, estimated that Milwaukee County needs 1,260 units of permanent supportive housing. Counting the 793 units that were either occupied, under construction or proposed by the end of 2016, our community is more than 60 percent of the way to that goal.



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