

Manitowoc County Housing Coalition

Wednesday August 10, 2022

Dear Community Leader,

This letter expresses the Manitowoc County Housing Coalition's support for the Manitowoc Warming Shelter.

During Manitowoc County's July 2022 Point In Time Count, five (5) individuals were found sleeping in the outdoor elements and/or in vehicles in the City of Manitowoc alone. Additionally, all local shelters are experiencing record high waitlists, some reporting as many as twenty or more households without their own safe shelter. Recently, rental and housing assistance programs are experiencing a reduction in staffing and, in some instances, funding, which is negatively impacting the ability to help those in need.

Year-round, those seeking housing assistance encounter a lot of red tape which results in people going without safe shelter for days, weeks and sometimes months as they navigate social service systems. Compounded with long waitlists, employee shortages and a record low availability of affordable housing units, communities like ours will see the number of those experiencing homelessness continue to rise.

While a warming shelter is designed to provide temporary overnight safety, they also make communities better overall. Warming shelters often serve as the first place where people take steps towards improving their current situation. For example, individuals can get help connecting with and navigating community resources which can be a complex task even for the seasoned case worker. Having a place to go for safety, a warm meal, sleep and basic self care allows people the opportunity to address their most basic of human needs, which then increases their capacity to work towards other goals and aspirations.

The Manitowoc County Housing Coalition members fully support a drop-in low-barrier warming shelter in the City of Manitowoc for the reasons mentioned here, with the hope that our great community can give those experiencing homelessness access to safe overnight shelter during the colder seasons. We recognize this isn't going to end homelessness. It is, however, at a minimum, a resource that improves our community's ability to care for its greatest resource - our people - with dignity and start them on a journey that ends with a sustainable housing solution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
The Members of the Manitowoc County Housing Coalition

UNITED WAY MANITOWOC COUNTY
Ashley Bender, Executive Director
ashley@unitedwaymanitowocounty.org
920.682.8888

LIGHTHOUSE RECOVERY COMMUNITY CENTER, Inc.
Christma Rusch, Executive Director
director@lighthousecc.org
920.374.4433

HOPE HOUSE OF MANITOWOC COUNTY
Abby Abbet, Director
aabbet@hopehousemc.org
920.686.1436

THE HAVEN OF MANITOWOC COUNTY, INC.
Michael Etheridge, Executive Director
metheridge@thehavenofmanitowoc.org
920.652.9110

ST VINCENT DE PAUL - TWO RIVERS, INC
Laurie Cisler, Sec/Tres
stvincentdepaul_tr@yahoo.com
920.793.1266

LAKESHORE CAP, INC. OF WISCONSIN
Colleen Homb, Executive Director
colleenh@lakeshorecap.org
920-686-8705

THE SALVATION ARMY MANITOWOC COUNTY
Lt. Jenny Moffitt, Corps Officer
Jenny.Moffitt@usc.salvationarmy.org
920-684-7117