

United Way of Dane County Racial and Gender Equity and Inclusion Work in Housing

United Way of Dane County strongly believes that all families have strengths and the desire for their children to succeed. As a community, we all share a stake in the economic wellbeing of children and young families. At United Way of Dane County, our **Mission** is to unite the community to achieve measurable results and change lives – along with our Vision, Equity Statement and Values give voice to our aspiration for a better tomorrow, for every Dane County resident.

United Way of Dane County’s **Equity Statement** demonstrates this commitment: We aim to increase economic stability and decrease racial disparity in all our work. For Dane County to reach its fullest potential, we commit to engaging and involving diverse communities in decision making, leadership and action to achieve equitable outcomes in education, financial stability and health. We honor differences and create safe spaces for all voices to find common ground in building one community.

Racial disparities in poverty, both nationally and in Dane County, are pervasive and historic. Discriminatory public policies of earlier decades, continuing public policies that favor the most economically advantaged, the ability of families to transfer wealth between generations, housing covenants, employment trends, investments and marriage rates all contribute to disadvantage based on race. Specific Dane County Disparities that impact our community wide strategies include:

- Six-year graduation rates for African American and Latinx students in Dane County are 86.5% and 86.9% respectively, compared with 94.4% for White students. (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)
- 9,358 local adults over the age 25 do not have a high school degree¹. Without a high school diploma, annual earning power is \$19,169².
- Dane County has an extraordinarily high racial disparity in employment. Four times more African American adults are unemployed than white residents.
- Over 125 families are experiencing acute homelessness (staying in emergency shelter, or in a place not meant for human habitation, i.e. cars, outdoors or abandoned buildings). African Americans are considerably overrepresented among the homeless population compared to the overall Dane County population. While accounting for five percent of the Dane County population, African Americans account for 50 percent of all people experiencing homelessness.³
- Over 600 families are currently experiencing housing insecurity (not staying in shelter but are in temporary and uncertain living situations, i.e. doubled up with friends or self-paying at a hotel).
- Housing is considered to be unaffordable when it consumes more than 30 percent of a family budget, and 28,469 renters and 36,057 of homeowners in Dane County are paying between 50% and 75% of their income in rent or mortgages⁴.

United Way of Dane County’s **housing strategies focus on the goal of working together to stabilize families through direct access to affordable housing and quality case management.**

United Way of Dane County’s Strategies include:

- Housing First
- Eviction prevention and quality case management
- Leveraging resources
- Influencing policy
- Increasing affordable inventory

¹ United States Census Bureau American Community Survey 2018 5 Year Estimates

² United States Census Bureau’s 2005 Current Population Survey

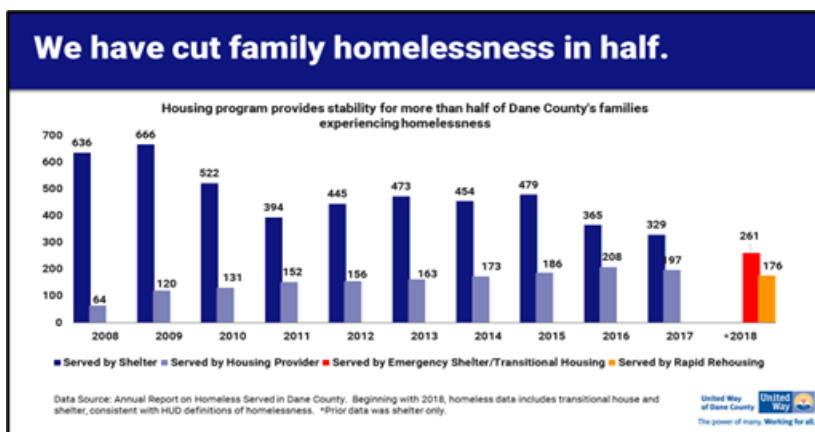
³ Dane County Point In Time Report- January 2019

⁴ Dane County Housing Assessment Report - 2019

- Landlord and tenant connections
- Access to healthy food

By strategically investing in best practices and prioritizing a Housing First approach, we have made great strides in combatting homelessness for families in our community. The partnership with family housing providers The Road Home, Salvation Army and YWCA has led to a steady decrease of children and families using shelter over the past several years. The annual July Point-in-Time count of **chronically homeless families**, however, increased from 139 in July 2014 to 142 in July 2019. Overall, **for families** during the same time period we see the numbers decreasing from 353 in 2014 to 221 in 2019. [Source: *Homeless Management Information System for Dane County*]

High quality case management remains a hallmark of our success. More than 1,500 families participated in eviction prevention, housing searches, tenant-landlord conversations, bridge building to other community resources, and financial literacy programs to help them obtain or maintain housing and work towards other goals.



Additional partnerships focused on school stability and Early Childhood Zones helped families with children ages 0-5 years, and school-aged children with housing assistance support.

Overall, our family homelessness system is delivering high quality results for families. However, as housing costs rise in Dane County, we remain in need of more affordable housing inventory and continued support for families

whose housing costs are far outpacing their earned wages.

Housing Signature Initiative Partnerships specifically impacting the Racial Disparities in Housing in Dane County

Housing First Overview – Housing First is a partnership of United Way of Dane County with the Salvation Army Dane County, The Road Home Dane County, and the YWCA Madison. The goal of the Housing First program is to help homeless families to move as quickly as possible to an apartment and gain access to services and supports to get their life on a positive life track.

Results: Since 2009, the Housing First Initiative has housed over 500 families (impacting over 1,100 kids) keeping them from homelessness. 92% of program participants are children of color. 85% Housing First children and families remained stably housed for an average of one year and 64% remained stably housed for two years. Nationally, the success rate is 80%.

Family Housing Stability Program Overview- The Family Housing Stability program, a partnership of United Way of Dane County with the YWCA Madison, was established as a shelter diversion program. The goal of the program is to keep children whose families are forced to leave their homes, but do not have the resources to secure another apartment, from having to enter the shelter system. The Family



Housing Stability program works with families who are doubled up with other families, living in a motel, or in other ways are at imminent risk of entering the shelter system.

Results: Since 2015, the Family Housing Stability program has helped 105 families with 244 children who were homeless or at imminent risk of entering the shelter to stabilize their housing. 98% of program participants are children of color. 93% of families became stably housed during the program, an average of 5.3 months for most families.

Reducing School Mobility Program Overview – Reducing School Mobility is a partnership of United Way of Dane County, Community Action Coalition, Porchlight, the START Program and the Siemer Institute. The goal is to stabilize housing for families with young children so the child can focus on their education. This program is specifically for families experiencing low incomes.

Results: 50% of participants in this program identify as people of color. 12 School-aged children served will remain stable in school as evidenced by remaining in their school of origin. 50 Children who set academic, health/wellness or socio-economic goals achieved their outcome.