

Agenda Item Report



Winnebago County
The Wave of the Future

DATE: March 21, 2022

FROM: Jon Doemel, County Executive; Bill Topel, Director of Human Services; Doug Gieryn, Director of Public Health; Mike Collard, Acting Director of Finance

RE: Neighborhood Improvement Fund Grant

General Description:

Accepting and appropriate the Neighborhood Improvement Fund Grant awarded to Winnebago County

Action Requested:

Move to approve the acceptance and allocation of the NIGF grant and authorize the Homelessness Prevention Center Pilot Program through Human Services.

Procedural Steps:

Committee of Jurisdiction: Human Services Board
Human Services Board recommended passage 7-0

Meeting date: March 22, 2022

Special Meeting of the County Board

Meeting date: March 29, 2022

Called pursuant to Board Rule 25.0 and Wisconsin ss. 59.11(2)

Background:

The state has been announcing various grant and other funding opportunities. One such program announced last fall is the Neighborhood Investment Fund. The competitive grant was due in November of last year and was exclusive to local governments and tribes. The county applied for money to fund housing insecurity as outlined in the [Winnebagoland Housing Coalition's](#) July 2021 report titled "[the Homeless Continuum](#)."

Lack of housing options was identified by the WHC in their report last summer as being a significant gap in service to the citizens of Winnebago County. The County Executive's Office coordinated with Public Health and Human Services departments to apply for a grant covering many facets of report and involved key community partners which had "shovel ready" projects to address the recommendations of the report. Every partner involved in this grant application serves a unique role in the amelioration and prevention of homelessness/ housing insecurity in Winnebago County. All projects approved in this grant application must be completed by December 31, 2024.

On Thursday, March 3, 2022, Governor Evers awarded Winnebago County local governments over \$16.8 million from the Neighborhood Improvement Fund which included \$10,351,686.15 to Winnebago County for housing/homelessness, \$4,388,025 city of Neenah for vulnerable populations, and \$2,074,000 to the city of Menasha for revitalization/blight elimination.

With your approval, the county will have the opportunity to make a dramatic impact on housing in our county. The Day by Day Warming Shelter currently operates at temporary 25-bed facility for five months during the coldest months. As a county, we have an extreme lack of long-term sobriety housing for those trying to adjust to new-found sobriety – Solutions Recovery will help us with this shortcoming. Oshkosh Kids Foundation has placed over 127 families with 378 children in hotel rooms since the beginning of the pandemic. A community center will ensure programs will be offered to their tiny home village. Covey currently has several people on their waiting list for adult family homes. Habitat for Humanity – Oshkosh

has been able to provide opportunities for home ownership at the rate of one to two families a year while their waiting list continues to grow. Human Services is proposing a first of its kind model to create a homelessness prevention center to provide information and referral services to keep people from landing back out on the streets, another key component of the WHC report.

An approved grant will enhance the ability of the county to collaborate with our community partners to affect change in multiple levels of homelessness.

More specifically the projects that were applied for and awarded:

- **Day By Day Warming Shelter**– Year-round homeless shelter for 50-60 residents per night.
 - **\$3,587,720 total:** \$3,500 for land costs (land due diligence and title/closing costs), \$3,254,220 for building costs (construction, electrical, HVAC, security), and \$330,000 for soft costs (architect, permit fees, utility connection fees)
- **Oshkosh Kids Foundation** – Community center for a tiny house village providing families short-term shelter and programing assisting them with stability and leading them to independence.
 - **\$570,000 total:** \$500,000 for community center within tiny house village (construction, engineering and design costs, HVAC) and \$70,000 for labor of a 0.5 FTE case manager and 0.5 FTE property manager
- **Solutions Recovery** – Filling the need for long-term sobriety housing as well as providing access to programs.
 - **\$1,500,000 total:** \$1,000,000 for property acquisition/building costs for 5-6 additional sober living properties and \$500,000 for recovery center upgrades and ADA compliant welcome center addition
- **Covey** – Provide more adult family housing for those with cognitive disabilities.
 - **\$1,063,124 total:** \$226,730 for Oshkosh Adult Family Home (9th and Minnesota St), \$457,664 for a second Oshkosh Adult Family Home, and \$378,730 for Menasha Adult Family Home (purchase of parcels, construction costs including labor, furnishings, and security systems)
- **Habitat for Humanity of Oshkosh** – Purchasing lots and offset construction cost giving Habitat the ability to house 5-6 families per year as opposed to the 1-2 they are currently able to provide.
 - **\$2,425,680.15 total:** \$680,000 for land acquisition costs (6 lots on Grove St, Oshkosh and parcels in Omro) and \$1,745,680.15 for construction costs (including 1602 Bowen St and 421 Monroe St, Oshkosh)
- **Housing Resource Center Pilot** – Create a resource for those at risk of losing shelter to prevent them from falling back into homelessness in the first place.
 - **\$941,228 total:** \$21,000 for emergency assistance, \$860,564 for personnel/admin costs, \$59,664 for office equipment and marketing

Policy Discussion:

Approval will allow the county to execute the grant agreement and begin a thorough review each project for compliance of normal Federal and State regulations, ARPA final rule, grant agreement procedures, and county practices. This is the standard process when the county accepts a grant. Because of the timeline under the grant, quick approval through the special meeting will allow for this process to begin immediately.

Approving this grant will not spend undesignated fund balance in a way that permanently lowers the fund balance amount. The county will cash-flow this grant in similar fashion to all our federal and state grants. We will put emphasis to ensure expenditures will be paid from the grant. There will be no "hope" to get paid or repaid.

This grant is the first step to invest in the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation's funded WHC report. Winnebago County already uses substantial tax levy and other financial resources from multiple departments to support many of the organizations within the grant. Prior to receiving grant money, each organization will sign agreements with the county to ensure adequate sustainability plans and compliance with the grant. With due diligence, it is unlikely that any of these programs create increased or undue burden on the county budget.

For example, the state, county, and several community partners spend tens of thousands each year to fund hotel vouchers for homeless individuals to ensure some stability. With an increase in housing resources, these resources could be reallocated to programing and sustainable operations.

Paramount to this grant application is the programming provided by the community partners. Additionally, many of the partners have committed substantial matching funds. There are no unbudgeted county funds necessary to execute this grant.

The Neighborhood Improvement Fund awards as presented by Governor Evers will invest nearly \$17 million into our county. Neenah and Menasha are fiscal agents of separate awards. Additionally, Covey will be purchasing housing in Menasha and all partners provide services to any county resident.

Part of the county portion of the grant is to hire a grant coordinator to ensure full compliance with the grant requirements and to ensure support within the community. Acceptance of this grant requires the taxpayers are protected from undue burden and their investment is not squandered.

After approval the next steps are:

- County hires an LTE to assist in grant deployment
- County works with Oshkosh Area Community Foundation and WHC partners to define outcomes
- County staff works with legal counsel and finance to ensure compliance with ARPA final rule, state statute, county code and grant agreement guidelines
- County works with community organizations and partners to ensure proper buy-in and collaboration for project successes

Attachments:

[Winnebagoland Housing Coalition Homeless Continuum Report \(July 2021\)](#)

Letters of Support from the Community Partners

Budget Transfer

Resolution