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Update on Homelessness in Ozaukee County: 2020

WILBERG COMMUNITY PLANNING LLC

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Update on Homelessness in Ozaukee County: 2020 was compiled in two stages. The first stage, completed in March 2020, presented data from 2019 along with information from interviews conducted with key informants in the Ozaukee homeless services system. Then, just as a community meeting was being planned to present the report, the Coronavirus Pandemic hit.

In the last several months, much has changed about the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Service providers have had to adapt their programs to fit those changing needs and the difficult realities of Covid-19. Because of the drastically different circumstances resulting from the pandemic, the report as it was finished in March was already out of date by September. Therefore, we embarked on a comprehensive updating – a second stage of our original report – to bring the community the most current information available about homelessness in Ozaukee County.

In this revised report, Information about need and service utilization is provided along with system insights gleaned from a small number of stakeholder interviews conducted in 2019 including individuals from Family Promise, St. Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army, Advocates of Ozaukee, and the Port Washington-Saukville School District.¹ Post-Covid-19 views (September 2020) were also obtained from key service providers. We hope this document will be used to inform and educate the community about homelessness and serve as a jumping off point for discussion and community planning going forward in these uncertain times.

2. HOMELESSNESS IN OZAUKEE COUNTY

Homelessness in Ozaukee County is an evolving problem. This means that both the nature and extent of homelessness is changing. Long thought to be a problem of “precarious housing,” there is an increasing belief among providers that more people – both individuals and families – are more immediately homeless including families evicted from their housing, those fleeing domestic violence, and a small number living in their cars or other places not for habitation.

In this section, we look at definitions, national, state, and local data, and multiple gauges of homelessness including requests for help, along with actual utilization of homeless services, e.g. shelter, homeless prevention, and rapid re-housing. What is revealed is a system that has developed enhanced capacity since 2015 with the addition of emergency shelter for single women and families, increased homeless prevention funding, the development of rapid re-housing as an alternative, and improved inter-agency coordination of effort.

Definitions of Homelessness

Homelessness is not a matter of opinion. Rather, the term has been defined very carefully by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. There are four official categories of homelessness.

¹ Key stakeholders who were interviewed include: Kathleen Fisher, Family Promise, Duane Woelfel, Port Washington-Saukville School District, Charlotte Coenen, Advocates of Ozaukee, Jeane Sager, Salvation Army, and Tracy Van Ruyen, St. Vincent de Paul.

Category 1 is Literally Homeless. This is when an individual or family is living outside, in a place not for human habitation, or is staying in a shelter. **Category 2 is Imminent Risk of Homelessness.** This is when an individual or family will soon lose their nighttime residence (within 14 days) and they lack the resources to obtain new housing. **Category 3 is Homeless under other Federal statutes.** This refers to unaccompanied youth under age 25 and families with children who lack permanent housing, most commonly, this is explained as “doubling up” or “couch surfing.” **Category 4 is Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV (Domestic Violence).** This is when an individual or family is fleeing DV, has no other residence, and lack the resources to obtain permanent housing.²

Context of Homelessness

Homelessness looks different in different communities. Nationally, according to the official one- day census of homelessness called the Point in Time Count conducted in January 2019, there were 567,715 homeless people in the United States. Of those, 37% were unsheltered. This means they were sleeping outside, in parks, under bridges, in encampments, or other places not for human habitation. Looking at the State of Wisconsin, there were 4,538 homeless people counted in the Point in Time, 7% unsheltered. Zooming in on the Balance of State Continuum of Care, of which Ozaukee County is one of 69 county members, the total number of homeless was 2,875 with just 3% unsheltered.³

Requests for Help

Calls for Assistance: IMPACT 2-1-1

2-1-1 is an information and referral line operated by IMPACT, Inc. 2-1-1 serves multiple counties in SE Wisconsin, providing information and referral to helping resources to thousands of callers each year. In 2019, 320 Ozaukee County residents called 2-1-1 for information and referral. This was 19 fewer calls than the 339 residents who called in 2018, a decrease of 5.6%. The number of calls made to 2-1-1 has dropped in the last several years. In 2014, 383 calls came into 2-1-1 from Ozaukee County. In 2019, that number had dropped to 320, a decrease of 16.4%. 2-1-1 has not been widely advertised in Ozaukee County to date but there is a new plan to increase the visibility of 2-1-1 and to encourage broader use going forward.

Ozaukee County

Distribution of 2-1-1 Calls by Zip Code and Municipality: 2019

ZIP Code	Municipality	2019 Calls	2019 Percent
53092	Mequon	66	20.6%
53012	Cedarburg	64	20.0%
53074	Port Washington	54	16.9%
53024	Grafton	52	16.3%
53080	Saukville	38	11.9%
53097	Mequon	17	5.3%

² HUD HDX, Homeless Definition, Criteria for Defining Homelessness, 2020.

³ HUD HDX, Point in Time, 2019. Note that the Balance of State Continuum of Care does not include the following counties: Dane, Milwaukee, and Racine.

53004	Belgium	12	3.8%
53021	Fredonia	11	3.4%
53092	Thiensville	4	1.3%
53013	Cedar Grove	1	0.3%
Total Callers from Ozaukee County		320	100.0%

What's Happened in 2020? The number of calls to 2-1-1 more than doubled in the first eight months of 2020 compared to all of 2019, rising from 320 to 818 (156%+). However, 464 of those calls (57%) were Covid-19 related, e.g. information about Covid-19 resources, testing sites, etc. per agreement with the Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services and Wisconsin Emergency Management.

**Distribution of 2-1-1 Callers by Service Request Category
Ozaukee County: 2019**

Service Requests by Category	2019 Total	2019 % of Callers
Housing	61	19.1%
Mental Health	48	15.0%
Substance Use Disorder	47	14.7%
Shelter and Homeless	37	11.6%
Health Care	33	10.3%
Information Services	25	7.6%
Individual, Family & Community Support	24	7.5%
Legal, Consumer and Public Safety	22	6.9%
Utility Assistance	21	6.6%
Food/Meals	19	5.9%
Transportation	11	3.4%
Clothing/Personal/Household Needs	7	2.2%
Income Support/Assistance	6	1.9%
Volunteers/Donations	4	1.3%
Other Government/Economic Services	3	0.9%
Disaster Services	2	0.6%
Education	2	0.6%
Employment	2	0.6%
Total Service Requests	374	

Housing-related issues (housing + shelter and homeless) accounted for 30.7% of a total of 374 specific service requests in 2019. These included requests pertaining to community shelters, rent payment assistance, electric service payment assistance, low income/subsidized private rental housing, tenant rights information/counseling, homeless motel vouchers, housing search assistance, rental deposit assistance, and Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers.

2-1-1 made 418 referrals to community resources including housing-related referrals to the Salvation Army of Ozaukee County, Advocates of Ozaukee, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,

Friedman-Mandel Management, Rural Housing, Energy Services, Inc. for Ozaukee County, Meridian Group, Family Promise of Washington County, Family Promise of Ozaukee County, and the Tenant Resource Center.

What’s Happened in 2020? Call volume more than doubled due to Covid-19 and that pattern is expected to continue into 2021 even if a vaccine is developed and distributed, according to Impact 2-1-1 Senior Account Manager, Bob Waite. From January to August 2020, there were 358 non-health care related calls. (Remember that health care included Covid-19 calls.) Housing-related issues accounted for 26.3% of all non-health care related calls.

Mr. Waite from 2-1-1 offered the following prediction based on his decades of experience managing 2-1-1 and compiling call data.

“My opinion is that the “bubble” will burst at some point for lower-income households. Back rent and utility bill payments will all become due at some point once these moratoriums end sometime next year. The stimulus and unemployment benefit programs are already delayed. Landlords are already pushing the limits with evictions that are not related to non-payment of rent. Health insurance coverage may already be eroding for those who have lost their jobs or have become underemployed. All of this will impact the basic needs services that are out there both for funding and how services are delivered.”

Calls for Help: Ozaukee County Helplines

Advocates of Ozaukee currently operates the helpline for Ozaukee County’s Homelessness Prevention Program. Calls also come to Family Promise and St. Vincent de Paul. Calls for help that came to Advocates of Ozaukee, Family Promise, and St. Vincent de Paul are reported in the consolidated data report compiled by Family Promise. This data represents calls for help and does not represent unduplicated clients.

Calls for Help: 2019	Family Promise	Advocates	St. Vincent de Paul	Total
Households without children	178		233	411
Households with children	160	982	211	1,353
- Adults	390		698	1,088
- Children	351		432	783
Total clients	919		1,363	2,282
Total households	338	982	444	1,764

A total of 1,764 households, representing 2,282 people, sought help in 2019. The great majority (76.6%) of calls for help came from households with children; 23.3% came from households without children. 2019 saw a monthly average of 110 calls.

What’s Happened in 2020? So far in 2020 (January-September), there have been 1,237 calls to Advocates of Ozaukee which operates the Homeless Prevention Program hotline for an average of 137 calls/month.

Risk of Homelessness

ALICE and Poverty in Ozaukee County

ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE is a method developed to quantify individuals and families with incomes that are above the poverty line but whose incomes are often not sufficient to meet monthly living costs. ALICE calculates the level of income necessary in each county to meet basic survival needs. In Ozaukee County in 2018, this amount was \$75,420 for a family of four and \$23,772 for a single individual. Taken another way, a household survival budget in Ozaukee County would require an hourly wage (for a single earner or couple in a family of four) of \$37.71. For a single adult, the survival budget hourly wage would have to be \$11.89.

In 2018, according to United Way of Wisconsin, 20.0% of Ozaukee County households (families and single adults) fell into the ALICE definition. Another 6.0% had incomes below the Federal Poverty Level. This results in a combined ALICE and poverty rate of 26.0% for Ozaukee County households. This rate, which represents slightly more than one in four households, is the lowest of all Wisconsin's 72 counties. The overall state rate (ALICE + poverty) is 34.0%.⁴

In Ozaukee County, single and co-habiting adults had a combined ALICE and poverty rate of 22%. Families with children had a rate of 13%: older adults (65+) had a rate of 41%.⁵

An insight offered by a key informant is that they are seeing an increasing number of recently widowed older women who have lost their household's second Social Security check and now must managed on just a single check.

Data about municipalities within Ozaukee County is very helpful in seeing the distribution of ALICE and poverty rates. Localities that exceed the Ozaukee County overall rate of 26% include Cedarburg (city), Grafton (village), Port Washington (city), Saukville (village), and Thiensville (village).

Ozaukee County ALICE + Poverty Households (Households with Incomes below the Household Survival Budget for Ozaukee County: \$23,772 for Single Adult, \$75,420 for Family of Four) 2018

Location	Total Households	% ALICE & Poverty Combined
Belgium	636	24%
Belgium village	854	18%
Cedarburg	2,089	15%
Cedarburg city	4,823	28%
Fredonia	833	26%
Fredonia village	911	26%
Grafton	1,569	15%
Grafton village	5,105	28%
Mequon city	9,074	19%
Port Washington	619	26%
Port Washington city	4,937	32%
Saukville	702	19%

⁴ ALICE in Wisconsin: A Financial Hardship Study, 2020 Wisconsin Report, United Way of Wisconsin, 2020.

⁵ ALICE in Ozaukee County, 2018 Point-in-Time Data, ALICE Report, 2020

Saukville village	1,828	44%
Thiensville village	1,559	34%

Rental Housing Costs and Vacancy Rate

Of the total occupied housing units in Ozaukee County (35,044), 75.2% were owner-occupied and 24.8% were renter-occupied. The average median value of owner-occupied units was \$262,100 and the average median rent of renter-occupied units was \$867.⁶ A critical indicator of housing affordability is the percentage of households paying more than 35% of their income for housing. Fewer than one in five homeowners with a mortgage (18.1%) fell in this category compared to one in three renters (33.2%).⁷

Providers see a very tight housing market, indicating that landlords often have numerous applications for a single apartment, putting households with any kind of negative credit or rental history at a great disadvantage.

Evictions

In 2019, there were 93 eviction filings in Ozaukee County. From January through September of 2020, there were 47 filings.⁸ Governor Evers' eviction moratorium issued March 27, 2020, resulted in zero eviction filings in April and two in March. This was a blanket moratorium without eligibility requirements. The federal CDC (Centers for Disease Control) moratorium issued September 3, 2020, and running until December 31, 2020, requires that renters meet several criteria in order to be covered by the moratorium. Eviction and the threat of eviction are likely to become more prevalent as the pandemic continues into the fall and winter.

Homeless Students in Ozaukee County

Every March, each school district in the State of Wisconsin reports the number of students identified as homeless according to the McKinney-Vento definition.⁹ The Department of Public Instruction (DPI)

⁶ U.S. Census, QuickFacts, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin, 2019

⁷ Selected Housing Characteristics 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

⁸ Wisconsin Circuit Court Access.

⁹ The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Act U.S.C. 1143a (2)), defines the term "homeless children and youths" as follows:

- (A) *Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and*
- (B) *Includes –*
 - i. *Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;*
 - ii. *Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not **designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;***
 - iii. *Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and*
 - iv. *Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses i through iii.*

publishes this data annually but with a significant time lag. Therefore, the most recent DPI data indicates that 29 students were identified as homeless in the Ozaukee County school districts, down from 39 in the prior year (2016-17). Information obtained directly from the Port Washington-Saukville district indicated a drastic drop to just 2 homeless students in 2018-19 and then a jump to 34 in late fall 2019.

This increase was attributed by a district official to several factors: more awareness of McKinney-Vento services among staff and parents, greater system awareness of homelessness, more community awareness and better understanding of what homelessness means and looks like in Ozaukee County, e.g. couch-surfing, families doubling up. Other factors contributing the increase included new enrollments from other districts, increased needs of families and children especially regarding mental health.

Ozaukee County School Districts

Number of Students Identified as Homeless as of 3/18/2019¹⁰

School District	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
Cedarburg	1	1	6	4	5
Grafton	4	8	3	5	7
Mequon-Thiensville	1	4	2	3	5
Northern Ozaukee	11	12	8	14	6
Port Washington-Saukville	12	14	13	40	25
Total	29	39	32	66	48

Point in Time Count/Housing Prioritization List

The Point in Time is conducted every month on the 4th Wednesday with results reported to the Balance of State Continuum of Care. The Point in Time counts people in emergency shelter as well as people who are unsheltered. The households/individuals on Ozaukee County's Point in Time benefit from the collaborative efforts of the principal homeless serving agencies (Family Promise, Advocates of Ozaukee, Salvation Army, and St. Vincent de Paul) to cooperatively address needs. At the same time, the households/individuals identified in each month's Point in Time comprise the Prioritization List for Rapid Re-Housing administered by Family Promise.

As of December 31, 2019, there were 15 households comprised of 34 people on the Ozaukee County Prioritization List, which is essentially the number homeless at that point in time. Of the 15 households, 8 were households without children and 7 were households with children. This represents a snapshot of homelessness in Ozaukee County equivalent to the Point in Time.

What's Happened in 2020? As of September 23, 2020, there were 16 households (29 people) on the Prioritization List. This represents households/people who were literally homeless on that date, e.g. unsheltered or in emergency shelter. The high for 2020 was in August with 20 households (42 people). Further, there was a cumulative total of 155 households (280 people) January-September 2020, with 112 people in emergency shelter during that time.¹¹

¹⁰ Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Data, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, <https://dpi.wi.gov/homeless/data>

¹¹ Family Promise data report, October 14, 2020.

Emergency Shelter Utilization by Ozaukee County Residents

There are two providers of emergency shelter in Ozaukee County: Family Promise, which is an emergency shelter for single women and families, and Advocates of Ozaukee, which is a domestic violence shelter serving single women and families. In 2019, a total of 69 households, including 157 people, utilized emergency shelter in Ozaukee County. Of this number, 16 households (40 people) were sheltered at Family Promise and 53 households (117 people) were sheltered at Advocates of Ozaukee.

Looking at Family Promise specifically, there were 8 households without children served, and 8 households with children served. In the households with children, there were 13 adults and 19 children.

At Advocates, there were 36 households without children served and 17 households with children served. In the households with children, there were 23 adults and 58 children. Here is the summary table.

Emergency Shelter Utilization: 2019	Family Promise	Advocates	Total
Households without children	8	36	44
Households with children	8	17	25
- Adults	13	23	36
- Children	19	58	77
Total clients	40	117	157
Total households	16	53	69

Looked at another way, Ozaukee County's emergency shelter resources serve a high proportion of single adults (women). Overall, 63.8% of the individuals sheltered in 2019 were single adults (households without children). At Advocates, 67.9% were single adults, and at Family Promise, 50.0% were single adults. The emergency shelter system in Ozaukee served an average of 5.75 households/month.

What's Happened in 2020? So far in 2020 (January-September), 131 people have stayed in emergency shelter. This includes 37 households without children, 26 households with children for a total of 63 households (131 people). An average of 7.0 households/month were served.

Utilization of Homeless Prevention Assistance (Rent Assistance) and Rapid Re-Housing

Four organizations provide homeless prevention assistance: Family Promise, Advocates of Ozaukee, St. Vincent de Paul, and Salvation Army. We know that organizations sometimes collaborate on assisting households so it is not clear the extent to which the data provided represent possible duplications.

In 2019, the four homeless prevention organizations provided \$103,721 in homeless prevention assistance to 393 households. Of the households helped, 45.0% were households without children and 55.0% were households with children. Assistance amounts ranged from \$655 (Family Promise) to \$199 (St. Vincent de Paul) with an average amount of \$264.

Details are provided below.

Homeless Prevention/Rent Assistance: 2019	Family Promise	Advocates	St. Vincent de Paul	Salvation Army	Total
Households without children	5	25	81	66	177
Households with children	9	41	56	110	216

- Adults	14	86	153	115	369
- Children	10	91	132	146	379
Total clients	29	202	366	328	925
Total households	14	66	137	176	393
HP Funds Distributed	\$9,172	\$29,721	\$27,309	\$37,519	\$103,721
Average per household	\$655	\$450	\$199	\$213	\$264

In addition to Homeless Prevention Assistance which helps people stay in their homes, Salvation Army also provides hotel vouchers. These are issued when an individual or family is suddenly homeless and they need shelter while a more long-range plan is developed by the system partners. In 2019, the Salvation provided 53 hotel vouchers totaling \$3,792. Typically, hotel vouchers were used for very short-term needs.

What’s Happened in 2020? There has been a substantial increase in funding for homelessness prevention/rent assistance in 2020. All told, there are six sources of rent assistance, not counting Salvation Army hotel vouchers. These include EHH (Emergency Housing & Homeless Grant), WRAP (Wisconsin Rental Assistance Program), Rapid Re-Housing (Federal grant through the Balance of State Continuum of Care), EFSP (Emergency Food & Shelter Program), United Way of Northern Ozaukee, United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County, and agency funding through Advocates of Ozaukee Salvation Army, and St. Vincent de Paul. Between January-September 2020, \$276,888 in assistance was provided to 317 households for an average of \$873/household.

3. Key Informant Insights: 2019

Following are insights that emerged from interviews conducted in late 2019 with key informants.

1. The community is becoming better informed about homelessness. There is more understanding of how homelessness looks in Ozaukee County, e.g. more likely to be couch-surfing and doubling up vs. someone living on the street/unsheltered. Key informants felt that the stigma of homelessness was somewhat reduced because of increased visibility/accessibility of services, such as the Ozaukee County Homelessness Prevention Program and Helpline.
2. Port Washington-Saukville School District has elevated homeless services within its system by querying all families regarding homelessness, enhancing homeless liaison function at the school level, addressing immediate logistical needs, e.g. transportation and shelter, and addressing longer term issues related to social emotional support and mental health services.
3. Collaboration has improved. There is a sense that “We’re getting better at it.” This is something highlighted both at the case level in terms of agency staff working together to address a specific client’s needs and at the system level in terms of agencies working collaboratively on funding and program development via the local continuum of care.
4. Criteria used by various groups providing homeless prevention assistance vary. This does not appear to be a problem but it is a fact that the four different organizations doing homeless prevention assistance (Family Promise, Advocates, St. Vincent de Paul, and Salvation Army) have somewhat

different approaches. There is a personal dimension to the assistance interaction that is more prominent than it might be in a larger county with higher volume.

5. Flexible funding in homeless prevention is a hallmark of Ozaukee County's system. Individual organizations tailor their assistance to the specific needs presented by an individual or household, sometimes paying a utility bill, other times paying part or all of the rent. Moreover, organizations piece together assistance, using funds from more than one pot to come up with the sum needed to forestall homelessness. This is a highly personalized-interactive system made possible by the comparatively low number of homeless people and the relationships developed between organizational staff/volunteers.
6. The Homelessness Prevention helpline function is managed by Advocates of Ozaukee with calls also going to Family Promise and St. Vincent de Paul. Immediate need is addressed with hotel vouchers provided by Salvation Army and available through Advocates and the Sheriff's Department. IMPACT 2-1-1, the primary information and referral line in the region, is not yet a critical component in the service delivery system.
7. Causes of homelessness cited by key informants include: domestic violence, relationship breakdown, unemployment/work history problems, benefits issues, mental health challenges, especially depression and anxiety, addiction, and physically disabling conditions. Issues related to employability including mental health issues, poor job history, and concerns regarding drug testing, e.g. worry about failing a drug test, were cited as well. Last, housing affordability in Ozaukee County was mentioned by all key informants.
8. There is currently no shelter resource for homeless single men. Individuals who cannot be assisted in Ozaukee County are frequently sent to shelter in Sheboygan, Waukesha, or Milwaukee, but transportation to these locations can be a challenge. There seems to be interest in developing new strategies for this population that do not involve the development of another shelter.
9. United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County has developed a new Safe and Stable Homes initiative with the goal of eliminating family homelessness by 2025. Ozaukee County is included in this initiative and it is anticipated that additional funding for staffing and homeless prevention will be provided through this initiative.

4. Provider Reflections on the Impact of the Pandemic: 2020

The pandemic changed so much about our day to day lives. For the Ozaukee County shelter system, the pandemic brought about changes in who sought out help as well as in how help could be provided. We asked the leadership of Salvation Army, Advocates of Ozaukee, St. Vincent De Paul, and Family Promise to reflect on this new reality. Their responses are provided here but can be summed up by the following:

- Increased number of first-time homeless
- Reduced shelter capacity to allow for social distancing (Advocates of Ozaukee)
- Alternative shelter strategies (Family Promise use of a motel instead of its church network)
- Remote intake/case management via Zoom and phone

- Increasing funding from state and local sources to address ongoing and emergency needs
- Uncertainty about service delivery and funding for the future.

1. Since March 1st, has there been a change in who is requesting assistance for homeless-related situations? Are you seeing people coming from different circumstances than prior to March 1st?

Salvation Army: In April, we started seeing people who normally have been able to just squeak by but once Covid hit they were stretched just a bit too far. Many people who were unemployed or laid off because of Covid couldn't make rent payments or utility payments because unemployment checks were so backlogged. Too date, there are still people waiting on unemployment.

Advocates of Ozaukee: Many people calling for rent assistance since the pandemic began are people who have not had to reach out for homeless prevention assistance in the past because they have historically had a stable income. Many of the amounts we are paying (for rent assistance) are much higher than what we normally pay. As the pandemic continues, more calls are coming from these same people who still have a reduced or no income and need assistance again and are now at risk of homelessness. From my perspective (Executive Director), I've seen more people struggling to find family and friends who are willing to allow them to stay with or couch hop at their homes due to the pandemic.

St. Vincent De Paul: Since March 1st, we have seen more people that owe more than one month's rent. We have also been getting more calls from people in Mequon that need help with rent.

Family Promise: The biggest shift in need is from households who are experiencing difficulty paying their rent for the first time. So many people lost their jobs and the slow unemployment approval process created a significant problem for people who needed the additional income to pay their rent. Most people who presented as homeless were there for the first time.

2. How did you program/service change to accommodate people's needs within the restrictions and realities of the pandemic? What physical, staffing, and/or resource changes have you made?

Salvation Army: Because of the pandemic, we had to do things remotely. Instead of meeting in person, all of our outreach was conducted over the phone. Instead of returning calls from our assistance line once a week, we started retrieving calls on a daily basis to more quickly meet people's needs. We have provided assistance for other items people needed help with besides rent and utilities. Hotel vouchers were needed more to help with homeless people or people displaced from their home because someone in their home had Covid or because they did.

Advocates of Ozaukee: Most communication is done remotely through Zoom and phone calls for domestic and sexual violence outreach. We are still accommodating people fleeing domestic and sexual violence in our emergency shelter but are limiting the capacity to one family per room. If needed, we have the ability to put survivors in a hotel if no space is available to safely accommodate them in shelter or if the client is exhibiting (Covid) symptoms.

Calls for emergency rent assistance are being responded to quickly, on the next business day after a call is received, to ensure that a homeless situation is prevented when possible. Advocates staff has ongoing communication throughout the week with St. Vincent De Paul, Family Promise, and Salvation Army to work collaboratively to meet the needs of those at risk of homelessness.

St. Vincent De Paul: Before the pandemic, we did home visits. When the pandemic started, we went to phone or Zoom interviews. The staffing stayed the same. Because of there being more need, we had to lower the amount of money we could give to a person, especially in the Port Washington/Saukville area.

Family Process: With the Safe at Home order, congregations that provide the overnight shelter and meals for Family Promise shut down, creating a significant gap in services. To accommodate the increased number of households that are homeless in Ozaukee County, we reserved ten rooms at the Chalet. The rooms have been operating at almost 100% capacity since we began this service in April. Additionally, we moved our case manager over to the Chalet to improve direct services to clients.

3. How can the community support the needs of people who are homeless right now? What would you like to see happen in the broader Ozaukee community to address the issue of homelessness?

Salvation Army: Having a permanent shelter in Ozaukee County help house the homeless.

Advocates of Ozaukee: Provide financial support to agencies doing the work. I foresee an increase in the homelessness numbers as people continue to struggle to find work and support themselves during this time. Also, finding ways to help the community understand that homelessness and prevention of it is an issue in Ozaukee County also.

St. Vincent De Paul: I would like to see more low-income housing and a Family Promise (or multi-agency) shelter in a large facility that could accommodate more people.

Family Promise: The biggest support we could use right now is an acceptance from the community stakeholders that there are people in need in Ozaukee County. It can be exhausting to continue to see the need each and every day and then have to constantly explain to people that yes, they are from Ozaukee County, yes, they are literally homeless, yes, they have mental health and addiction issues. It is interesting because I even get questions from local community service providers needing constant verification that we are meeting a legitimate need in the community. We aren't making this up or bringing in people from Milwaukee.

A willingness to support the efforts of the local service providers financially would be greatly appreciated. We are a wealthy community and we need to do a better job of creating a culture of giving for Ozaukee County services. Another out of the box idea is for Ozaukee County to consider "capping" the county.¹² This would bring in additional revenue to address unmet needs in the community. This would bring in additional revenue to address unmet needs in the community. Ozaukee County is one of only three counties in the state that are not "capped."

5. Summary Statements

Following are conclusions drawn by the researcher based on a review of all of the data gather for this report, both quantitative and qualitative.

1. Income insufficiency is a chronic and substantial challenge in Ozaukee County. One in four households (26%) falls below the ALICE + poverty level. Although this is the lowest percentage in the of the 72 counties in the state, it still represents a significant portion of the community's households

¹² Note: "Capping" refers to a county either having its own Community Action Program or being part of a several county area with a CAP.

This means that even after the pandemic has passed, there will remain a substantial group of households whose incomes put them on the brink of homelessness if they suffer job loss, illness, or other unexpected emergency.

2. The Ozaukee County homeless services system offers a continuum of services to homeless households that includes a hotline, homeless prevention, emergency shelter, and rapid re-housing. The system has expanded in types of services and the number served since 2015. The greater visibility of the system is likely to generate increased requests for assistance as residents become more aware of the help that is available.
3. The 2015 Update on Homelessness in Ozaukee County identified three best practices appropriate to Ozaukee County needs: Coordinated Entry, Homeless Prevention, and Rapid Re-Housing. Of these Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing were the most fully implemented. Coordinated Entry has not been implemented in the same manner as larger counties although there is a Homeless Prevention Program hotline and providers collaborate on how to best address the needs of households on a Prioritization List which provides a monthly Point in Time count and functions as the gateway to Rapid Re-Housing resources.
4. Performance measure data which assesses the extent to which households served in one part of the system, e.g. emergency shelter, come back into the system after discharge or exit can be extremely useful in understanding the nature of homelessness in Ozaukee County. To what extent do households being served represent returning clients? If they are returning clients, what is the reason for their new homelessness? Are there opportunities to focus resources on those reasons? The current Balance of State Continuum of Care data system has the capacity to generate this information.
5. Ozaukee County operates its own hotline for housing emergencies/homelessness prevention. This keeps the function local and enhances the ability of homeless service agencies to coordinate their efforts, but it may also inhibit callers' access to other resources such as would be accessible via IMPACT 2-1-1's resource inventory. With plans envisioned to increase 2-1-1's footprint in Ozaukee County, it is not clear how 2-1-1 will affect the Advocates of Ozaukee-operated line which has already established a broad community identity. Collaboration on this front will be needed to ensure the best use of both resources for community members.
6. The Ozaukee County homeless services system is rightly focused on developing additional services to address emerging needs that stress prevention and rapid re-housing. At the same time, there is a likelihood that the shelter resource for families and single women may require redesign post-pandemic and there remains no shelter resource for single men.