

Dane Co. Exec. Parisi: Community stands to lose millions in President Trump's budget

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Contact:

Stephanie Wilson Miller

[608.267.8823](tel:608.267.8823)

Dane County residents would see immediate and severe impacts under the President's budget proposal, County Executive Joe Parisi announced today. Parisi was joined by a number of local advocates for a news conference at Domestic Abuse Intervention Services, a local agency that provides help to victims of domestic abuse that received funding from a community development initiative the President is looking to eliminate. In fact, since 2011 Dane County has allocated \$7 million in federal funds to promote economic development and affordable housing under what's known as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

"These critical dollars train residents for jobs, keep people in their home, help people afford housing and is vital to countless community organizations," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "The President's budget directly hurts those struggling to keep up financially, making it even harder for families to get ahead." Parisi noted community partners received over \$1.3 million in CDBG support last year alone.

In addition to \$2 million in Dane County funds, CDBG funds supported construction of the new Domestic Abuse Intervention Services shelter in Madison in 2014. Numerous other local organizations like Movin' Out, Habitat for Humanity, Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, YWCA, Latino Chamber of Commerce and the Badger Prairie Needs Network have all benefited from the CDBG funding.

“We could not have made the Badger Prairie Needs Network what it is today without a block grant through CDBG,” Marcia Kasieta of the Needs Network said. “The increased and more efficient space largely funded by CDBG allows us to provide food assistance to over 11,000 Fitchburg, Verona, and South Madison residents each year, almost half of which are children. The block grant program allowed us to focus on our mission of fighting poverty and ending hunger rather than spending all our time on fundraising.” She noted the facility has served over 7,000 meals when school and senior meal programs aren’t available.

Since 2011, Dane County has assisted 116 businesses, 6408 low-income citizens, and 3480 people with a public service with CDBG funds. Additionally, Dane County has helped 177 households receive repair, 48 households have received assistance to purchase affordable housing, 21 units of affordable owner-occupied housing have been created, 19 affordable rental housing units have been created, and 46 rental housing units have been rehabbed.

In addition to eliminating CDBG, Dane County is deeply concerned about the potential elimination of affordable housing tax credits that have helped make collaborative housing projects between the City of Madison and Dane County possible. These major developments – the first on Rethke Avenue, the second of which is now proceeding on Tree Lane – have given homes to dozens of individuals and families who were previously homeless.

Federal officials continue to discuss cuts and drastic changes to Medicaid that would result in greater numbers of uninsured, making it harder for people to get mental health services or treatment for alcohol/drug problems. These cuts would bring about longer wait lists for those needing help, and higher costs for local taxpayers should the federal government decide to no longer provide services that are currently available.

County staff continue to evaluate all of the potential impacts of the President’s budget. In recent days the county was notified that cuts to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) could result in all Wisconsin counties losing over \$4 million in Emergency Management Planning Grant funds. Dane County’s share of this cut would be nearly a quarter of a million dollars, hurting the county’s ability to coordinate disaster preparedness and response efforts.

“As a caring, compassionate community, home to the fastest growing economy in the state, we need to be especially concerned about the impacts of these cuts on

our neighbors,” Parisi said. “What we’re seeing come out of Washington D.C. stands in direct contrast to the values of our county.”