

Dane County: has invested over \$1.8 million in homelessness services since start of COVID-19 pandemic

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Today, County Executive Joe Parisi announced that Dane County has invested more than \$1.8 million in services to support individuals experiencing homelessness since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts have included reserving hotel rooms to help create proper social distancing, supportive services, and food services. This investment is expected to increase as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

“We are committed to helping our most vulnerable residents receive the support and shelter they need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “Limiting the spread of the coronavirus is our top priority, and these efforts have helped us flatten the curve in our community. A huge thank you goes out to our staff and community partners who have worked to carry out these efforts.”

The County has partnered with the City of Madison and local service agencies on these efforts, including funds to support the relocation of the emergency overnight shelter for men experiencing homelessness to the Warner Park Community Center.

In March, County Executive Parisi announced that Dane County had partnered with several hotels in the Madison area to secure 72 hotel rooms for individuals experiencing homelessness. Currently, over 300 individuals have been relocated to more than 180 hotel rooms with 6 hotel partners. Dane County has spent about \$395,040 to house individuals experiencing homelessness in these hotel rooms so far.

The hotel rooms are being used for families experiencing homelessness who were staying in overnight shelter, and individuals experiencing homelessness who are considered high-risk by the CDC for contracting COVID-19. Of the over 300 individuals now being served, over 150 are individuals in families with children.

Dane County has allocated \$545,000 in supportive services for hotel guests so far, to help guests make connections to resources including housing, economic assistance benefits, behavioral health, and medical supports. Meals are being provided at hotel locations and the Warner Park Community Center, totaling more than \$262,000 to date.

Most recently, Dane County finalized a \$252,000 agreement to provide lodging for individuals experiencing homelessness who are symptomatic and in need of space to isolate while they recover. \$250,000 will help fund on-site nurse support. Community partners have and will continue to provide phone call outreach to guests to connect them to basic needs and services.

Additionally, Dane County has invested \$16,860 since March 23 to help increase access to hygiene resources for individuals who are staying outside through the placement of handwashing stations and portable toilets throughout downtown Madison and other strategic locations.