Milwaukee County Exec Crowley: Milwaukee recognized with nation's lowest unsheltered homeless population

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MILWAUKEE, WI – Milwaukee County, the City of Milwaukee, key business leaders and community partners today announced that Milwaukee has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with the lowest unsheltered homeless population of any community per capita in the nation. Last year, seventeen unsheltered individuals were counted, representing over a 70 percent reduction from the previous year.

Milwaukee County has taken a holistic approach to improving health outcomes in the community looking through the lens of social determinants of health. The County invests funds into **Housing First** programs, with the clear view that housing ends homelessness and with a commitment to continue to focus on increasing permanent housing options to end the cycle of homelessness.

"Housing security is a key determinant of health for County residents. When you can't count on having a roof over your head at night it compounds stress and anxiety and contributes mightily to the poor health disparities we see throughout the region," said Milwaukee **County Executive David Crowley. "**I'm happy to say that by prioritizing an evidence-based approach and maximizing collaborative efforts in the public and private sectors, we have reached this significant milestone, but the work is not done. As a County, region, and whole community, we must use this momentum to accelerate our efforts to invest upstream and end chronic homelessness in Milwaukee County."

Since the start of Housing First in 2015, Milwaukee has seen a 92 percent reduction in the unsheltered population. In addition, Milwaukee County has been a national leader in rental assistance, administering over $110 million dollars in federal emergency rental assistance funds.

"With the Housing First initiative, Milwaukee County has led the way with critical investments to combat homelessness. When we reduce homelessness, we not only have healthier and safer communities, but also save tax payers money by avoiding undue burdens on our legal and health systems," **said Sen. Tammy Baldwin.** "Housing is a human right, and I am proud to be a partner for Milwaukee County as we work together to end homelessness."

"Milwaukee County's efforts to address housing needs is improving lives, advancing equity, and helping residents find stable housing. Housing is a stabilizing force that helps people build live successful lives," **said Rep. Gwen Moore.** "I am so proud of what our local leaders are doing, but we must all understand that the fight against homelessness is an ongoing challenge. I will continue to work to ensure that the federal government remains a strong partner in these efforts to ensure that all Milwaukeeans have a place to call home."

Milwaukee County recently received a $7 million American Relief Plan Act (ARPA) contribution from the State of Wisconsin to focus on the development of over 100 homes in the neighborhood surrounding the County's Marcia P. Coggs Human Services Center. Last month, the Milwaukee County Board approved a $2 million investment from County ARPA funds for Housing Services to partner with Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Services to create additional crisis beds to immediately assist those who find themselves victims of trauma or find themselves in an active crisis situation. The County also recently was awarded an $895,000 competitive grant through the HUD Continuum of Care process to serve adult families and individuals fleeing or attempted to flee domestic violence, individuals involved in the street-based sex trade, and survivors of sex trafficking.

Every year HUD commemorates *National Fair Housing Month* (April) advancing equity in housing and securing equal access to housing opportunities for all.