

# Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

November 14, 2019

Senator Alberta Darling  
Room 317 East  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707

Representative John Nygren  
Room 309 East  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707

Via Hand Delivery

Senator Darling & Representative Nygren:

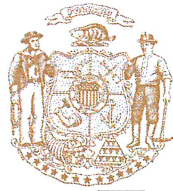
On July 15, 2019, the Department of Administration submitted to you a request for the release of \$3 million GPR annually and \$500,000 PR annually to fund the recommendations of the Interagency Council on Homelessness. In addition, the Department of Administration submitted a request on behalf of the Department of Children and Families for \$250,000 annually to fund skills enhancement. I am writing to urge you to convene the Joint Committee on Finance at the earliest opportunity to release these dollars which have now been awaiting your action for 4 months.

At my request, the Department of Administration prioritized this request immediately after passage of the 2019-21 budget, to ensure that it was submitted to the Joint Committee on Finance for consideration as quickly as possible. I was concerned that if funds were not promptly released, the Department of Administration could not move forward with these critical programs before the Wisconsin winter sets in. As snow has fallen and temperatures have continued to drop, my concern has only grown.

The funding for these programs was proposed by the Interagency Council on Homelessness under the Walker administration, chaired by former Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch. Subsequently, bills supporting these programs were introduced this session and have passed the State Assembly, but have yet to be taken up by the State Senate. Fortunately, with the funding that has been set aside during the budget process, the Joint Committee on Finance can stop this unnecessary delay and ensure that these bipartisan solutions can move forward.

With the proposals that are pending before your committee, we have the opportunity to do something positive together.

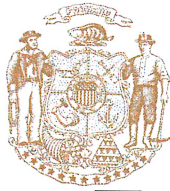
- Increase Prevention Funding
  - \$500,000 GPR
  - The Homelessness Prevention program provides grants to low- or moderate-income families or persons to defray housing costs, and provides priority grants to certain at-risk individuals, such as homeless individuals, the elderly, physically disabled persons, and families in retaining housing and foreclosure prevention.



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- Create State Diversion Program
  - \$300,000 GPR
  - These funds would support a new homelessness diversion program in which the Department may make grants to agents to assist persons or families of low or moderate income in obtaining and participating in diversion programming. The National Alliance to End Homelessness defines successful diversion as “[preventing] homelessness for people seeking shelter by helping them identify immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing.”
- Increase State Shelter Subsidy Grant
  - \$500,000 GPR
  - The State Shelter Subsidy Grant (SSSG) provides up to 50% of an emergency shelter or voucher program’s annual operating budget.
- Increase Housing Assistance Program (HAP) Funding
  - \$900,000 GPR
  - The Housing Assistance Program (HAP) provides grants to operate housing, and to provide support services for the homeless, with the goal of facilitating the movement of homeless individuals and families into independent living.
- Increase Funding For Wisconsin Homeless Case Management Services Grant Program
  - \$500,000 PR-S
  - The Homeless Case Management Services Grant Program was created in 2017 Wisconsin Act 59 and provides funding to grantees for the purposes of providing intensive case management services to homeless families. The services focus on financial management, employment, ensuring school continuation for children, and enrolling unemployed and underemployed parents in W-2 and the Foodshare employment and training program.
- Create Grant For Housing Navigation
  - \$300,000 GPR
  - The Housing Navigation Services Grant would be awarded to federally-established Continuua of Care to fund positions that would help connect homeless individuals and families with available housing.
- Create Grant for Minor Repairs for Affordable Housing
  - \$500,000 GPR
  - This program would create a grant program by which the Department could award small grants to landlords to address Housing Quality Standards (HQS) deficiencies and to mitigate risks to landlords who rent units to homeless people so their units may return to HQS compliance in the event units sustain property damage.
- Funding and Authority for Additional Positions
  - With the expansion of existing programs and the creation of the Housing Navigation Grant, Housing Quality Standards Grant, and diversion programming, the department estimates that an additional 2.0 authorized FTE will be necessary for DEHCR to administer its housing program responsibilities.



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In January of this year, over 4,500 people were counted in the last winter Point-in-Time count as being homeless in Wisconsin – with 295 of these people being unsheltered. Without acting to provide this help, which has broad bipartisan support, we will continue to put these people in jeopardy.

As the Legislature does not plan to be in session again before the winter, I am hopeful that you will share my concern about the continued delay in release of this funding and act immediately to consider these requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Evers".

Tony Evers  
Governor