



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Frigid winter temps lead to concern about homeless population

Milwaukee, WI – On an average weekday, IMPACT helps nearly 500 people in Southeastern Wisconsin get connected to family, health and social services; approximately 43% are seeking housing resources including emergency shelter. In December 2015, IMPACT made 250 shelter placements for Milwaukee County residents: 100 single men, 88 single women, and 62 families.

Individuals and families experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis, and Milwaukee-based organizations providing housing or diversion services, connect with each other in a systematic and efficient manner under a new system implemented in 2013. Coordinated Entry for Homeless Services utilizes a housing crisis assessment to prioritize placements based on most critical need. Despite the large number of people who receive help every day, there are times when there are more people seeking shelter than there is room available. When that happens, individuals and families wait for the next appropriate opening.

Many people seeking emergency shelter or other homeless services have complex issues contributing to or complicating their present situation including health or mental health problems; or lack of employment, childcare, transportation, etc. IMPACT's role is to offer referrals to other resources that may help alleviate or end the client's housing crisis such as meal sites, food pantries, warming rooms, utility bill payment assistance, etc.

In addition to ensuring that the most vulnerable people are placed in available shelter beds, the process of assessing each individual means special considerations such as a mental or physical disability, or serious illness can be factored into referral determinations as some shelters include on-site medical services and allow for daytime residency.

Currently, the following shelters are utilizing the Coordinated Entry system: Cathedral Center; Guest House of Milwaukee; Hope House of Milwaukee; Salvation Army Emergency Lodge; and Milwaukee Women's Center (family placements only). Shelters serving special populations (veterans, unaccompanied youth, and people experiencing domestic violence) are not yet utilizing Coordinated Entry. Clients in those categories may contact IMPACT or the shelters directly.

Frigid temps tend to result in more requests for furnace repair referrals; assistance getting a landlord to address conditions rendering dwellings unsafe, unsanitary or unhealthful for human habitation including issues with electrical, heating, plumbing or infestations; and, recommendations for avoiding an eviction. Often, people contact IMPACT seeking emergency shelter and other homeless services because they have been living with family or friends, but have been asked to leave by the occupant or required to leave by the occupant's landlord. Our 2-1-1 community resource specialists will problem solve with the client to stabilize their current situation so that emergency shelter is not required.

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The data IMPACT collects from the Coordinated Entry process helps identify service gaps and emerging or unmet needs more quickly. This information is shared with and reviewed by system partners, community stakeholders, elected officials, and potential funders. For example, Hope House converted its program from family transitional housing to family emergency shelter. Recently, the City of Milwaukee Community Development Grants Administration used data to justify the opening of Greater New Birth Church's warming room which helps fill a need for family and single adult overflow.

To access Coordinated Entry for Homeless Services:

- **Simply dial 2-1-1 [local 414-773-0211 / toll-free 1-866-211-3380] Available 24/7**
- **Text your ZIP Code to 898-211 on weekdays 9am to 9pm**
- **Visit www.impactinc.org/impact-2-1-1/ to begin an online chat weekdays 9am to 9pm.**

The Coordinated Entry system is directed by the Milwaukee Continuum of Care and the lead agency is United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County.

IMPACT's family of services connects nearly 300,000 people each year with services that help maintain stability, restore health, enhance productivity and foster system improvement. Headquartered in Southeastern Wisconsin, IMPACT has established a productive, collaborative relationship with leading businesses, funders, community stakeholders and other program providers in an effort to change lives, for good.

For more information about Coordinated Entry, please refer to the attached document

Coordinated Entry for Homeless Services

Guiding Principles

The Coordinated Entry for Homeless Services (CE) system utilizes a client-centered approach via principals of Housing First.

- CE follows a “needs-based” approach to placement (not “first-come, first-served”)
- CE removes the arbitrary elements of service delivery (“Should we accept this individual/family into our program vs. which program will actually best suit the client”) while honoring the uniqueness of each program
- CE takes into account the client’s needs and preferences for intervention
- CE ensures that clients receive the right referral, the first time
- CE utilizes homelessness prevention and diversion strategies when appropriate
- CE documents and reports data for evaluation and systems planning

Process

- Shelters notify IMPACT about the number of available shelter beds for the day.
- IMPACT’s 2-1-1 community resource specialists conduct a vulnerability assessment of all individuals and families who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless and seeking shelter.
- IMPACT utilizes shelter diversion techniques if appropriate. This includes providing referrals to non-shelter related homeless services and other basic needs resources to stabilize the client.
- IMPACT prioritizes shelter placements based on available beds and most critical need.
- Clients who are granted a placement are warm-transferred to the shelter to set up an intake appointment.
- Client arrives at shelter for intake.
- Shelter provides case management services to maximize self-sufficiency and reduce recidivism.
- A client who is not immediately granted a referral to shelter is placed on a waiting list for 30 days which is maintained by IMPACT. As shelter beds become available, clients on the waiting list are considered based on their assessment’s vulnerability score. IMPACT will call the client to determine if they remain in need of shelter and what, if anything, has changed to affect their vulnerability score. If the client is proven to have the highest priority of need, they are granted shelter placement.

Benefits

- When in crisis, consumers can access and utilize homeless services in an efficient and more respectful manner.
- Multiple methods of access to CE (talk, text, online chat)
- Consistent requirements ensure that everyone seeking shelter completes the same assessment process, and all shelters follow the same protocol in order to share the responsibility of hard-to-serve clients.
- Special considerations such as chronic homelessness, a mental health or physical disability, or a serious illness, are factored into referral determinations as some shelters include on-site medical services and allow for daytime residency.
- IMPACT offers referrals to other resources that may alleviate the client’s housing crisis.
- Shelter staff can focus on case management and client-focused services such as employment assistance, and housing search and placement.
- IMPACT collects and shares data which helps identify gaps in service, and emerging or unmet needs.
- Providers comply with HUD’s 2012 ESG/CoC regulations, and Wisconsin’s 2013-14 ETH standards.
- Governance is directed by the Milwaukee Continuum of Care which has named United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County as the lead agency.