



Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council *Executive Summary*

Overview

WDEOC is ready to embark on a new chapter with its Housing and Family Services programming. This project will include expanded office space for its existing Housing and Family Services, which will elevate collaborative opportunities and delivery of services. The facility will also have the addition of a long-needed Day Resource Center (DRC).

Need

In 2018, the city of Eau Claire engaged the services of Erin Healy Consulting to explore establishing a collaborative to end homelessness in Eau Claire. The study demonstrated that in addition to affordable housing, day services along with access to housing services were a critical need for the city's unhoused population.

Professionals working in the field of homelessness in Eau Claire put the number of unhoused people somewhere between 500 and 700. There are very real

downstream consequences when a community does not address the challenges presented when someone is unhoused. People struggling with mental health or addiction issues need somewhere to go—for help, for shelter, for hope.

Solution

WDEOC's new DRC will combine a day shelter that will operate seven days a week and offer amenities like showers and laundry facilities along with a resource center that will offer trained counselors and a menu of services focused on mental health and addiction recovery.

Hope Gospel Mission (HGM), a local nonprofit with a strong reputation for its counseling and recovery programs for the unhoused, will manage the DRC. Chris Hedlund, program director, and his team of counselors bring their vision and experience to this proposal; however, while their personal faith drives their mission, this is a secular outreach collaboration with other area service providers.

WDEOC will own and manage the new site for its Housing and Family Services programming and DRC.

After an extensive search, the agency purchased and remodeled an existing building to meet the space needs for all the services. Community Haven House in downtown Eau Claire has filled the need for a day shelter on a provisional basis. Now, WDEOC, an organization with the management skills of a large secular nonprofit, is teaming up HGM, along with support from the city of Eau Claire. Hope Gospel Mission assumed operations of Community Haven House on April 1, 2025, and is expanding the project through the Day Resource Center. In recognition of the dedicated volunteer leadership at Community Haven House, the new DRC will proudly retain the same name moving forward. In recognition of the volunteer leadership at Community Haven House, the new DRC will continue to carry the same name into the future.

Organizations advocating for this project include a mix of government agencies, local agencies, and community groups. Many of them will be provided space in the DRC to collaborate and offer on-site services.

Cost

The goal of the capital campaign is to raise \$5.725M. This includes two-and-a-half years of operating expenses for the DRC. After that, HGM will assume the costs of running the Center. HGM is a fiscally strong

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a track record of success since its establishment in 1998, and it will fundraise the necessary long-term support for the Day Resource Center.

Request

WDEOC is seeking contributions as multi-year pledges which can be paid over five years.

Status

The city of Eau Claire is supporting the project with a gift of \$500,000. **Including this commitment, WDEOC has already received more than \$1.4 million in pledge commitments toward the project as of May 1, 2025.**

Schedule

- January 2025: Pre-capital campaign planning began
- June – Aug 2025: Building is purchased and remodeled
- June – Oct 2025: Capital campaign – Silent Phase
- Nov – Aug 2025: Capital campaign – Public Phase
- January 2026: Day Resource Center opens

