

# COMMUNITY QUARTERLY REPORT JAN-MARCH 2024



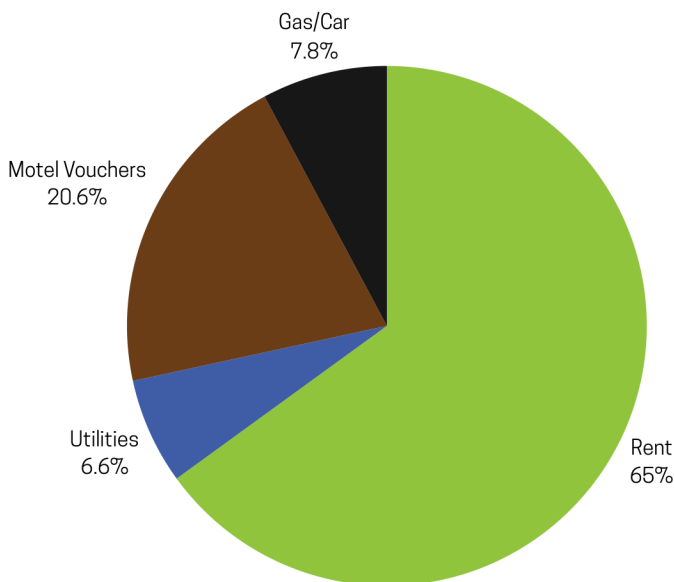
## PURPOSE:

To present quarterly data from the Bethel House Emergency Assistance program to inform the public and local leaders & decision-makers about the realities of lower-income families in our community who are facing homelessness or who are unhoused.

# \$6,063.16

This quarter, 29 families applied for financial assistance. We distributed the above total to 17 of those families, supporting 22 adults and 35 children.

Through that support and the support of two other church partner programs, we stopped four evictions and kept nine local children in their homes and schools.



**Average monthly assistance of \$2,021.05**

## WHO ARE THESE 17 FAMILIES?



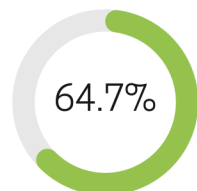
### Connection to Whitewater

All families who receive Bethel House assistance must have a connection to the greater Whitewater community.



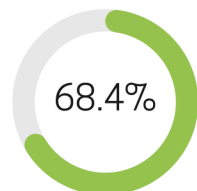
### Children under the age of 18

All families who receive Bethel House assistance must also have primary custody of children under the age of 18.



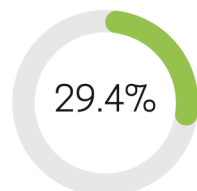
### Single-parent households

Almost 2/3 of the families helped this quarter were single-parent households.



### Employment Status

Over 2/3 of the families we supported had at least one full-time working adult in the household.



### Homeless

Five of the 17 families we supported this quarter were considered homeless, either fully unhoused or doubling up.

# WHY ARE FAMILIES ASKING FOR HELP FROM BETHEL HOUSE?

Although the specific reasons families seek support and assistance from Bethel House vary depending on the individual family’s circumstances, there are clear patterns of consistent barriers/issues that local families face that threaten their ability to stay or become housed. These issues are often common occurrences faced by ALL families, but far too many do not have the support structure or financial stability to overcome them.

- Hours cut at work or limited overtime available
- Fleeing (or facing) domestic violence
- Can’t afford car repairs/lost access to transportation
- Denied government assistance program
- High-risk pregnancy limiting availability to work
- Lost child support payments
- Missed work due to medical reasons (self)
- Missed work due to medical reasons (child)
- Lost childcare
- Car was repossessed
- Expenses from recently moving depleted savings

## WHY AREN'T SOME FAMILIES WORKING?

### Homeless



Unhoused families face tremendous barriers to securing work, primarily due to needing a permanent address (as almost all employers require). Other personal barriers include limited access to maintaining adequate personal hygiene and the inability to afford and/or launder clothing. Those barriers are amplified by institutional ones like discrimination in hiring practices.

Bethel House staff allows clients to utilize our mailing address to help secure employment

### Lost childcare/Stay-at-home parent

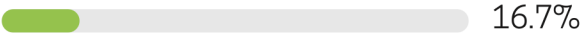


According to the 2022 ALICE report from United Way of Wisconsin, the average monthly cost of two children in daycare in Whitewater is \$1,328. The average hourly wage of Bethel House families is \$12/hour, meaning 37.4% of a two-parent household’s budget would be needed for childcare and 74.86% for a single-parent household.

A lack of childcare (including affordable childcare) is also a significant barrier to financial security for many local families.

Of the 19 census tracts in Walworth County, 14 of them are within a childcare desert.

### Recently lost their job/looking for a job



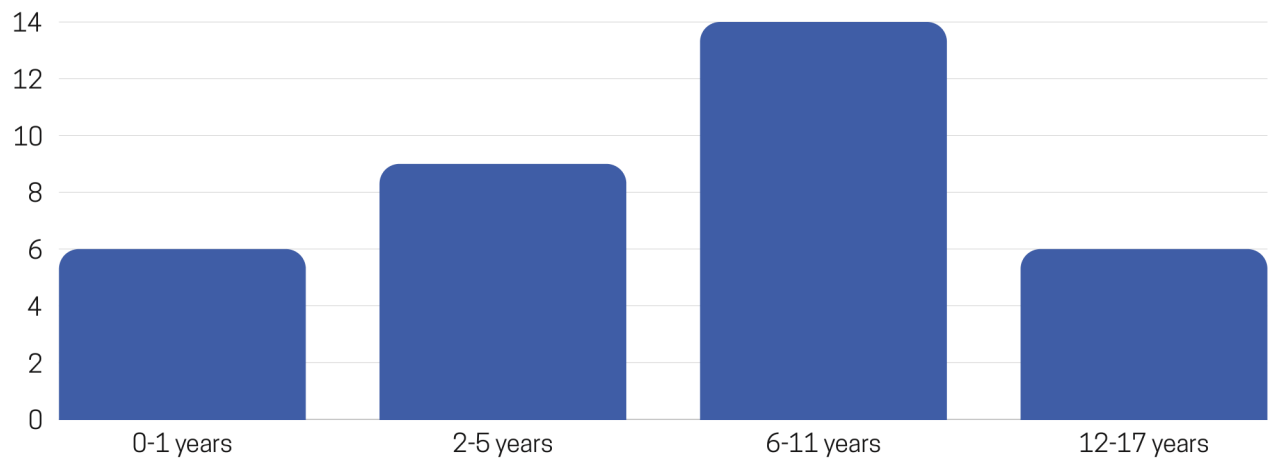
The most common reasons families seeking Bethel House assistance have lost their jobs have been issues with transportation (car wouldn’t start, flat tire, lost transportation option) and missing too many days off for having to stay home with sick children (these families do not receive any paid-time-off).

Wisconsin employers are not required to provide fringe benefits such as vacation, holiday, or sick pay.

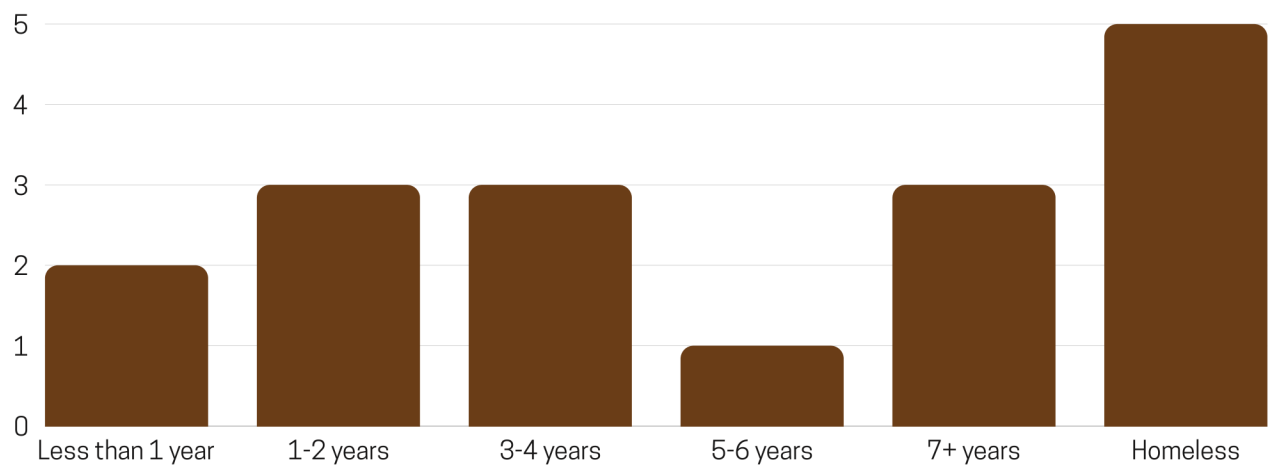
# MORE ABOUT THESE 35 CHILDREN:

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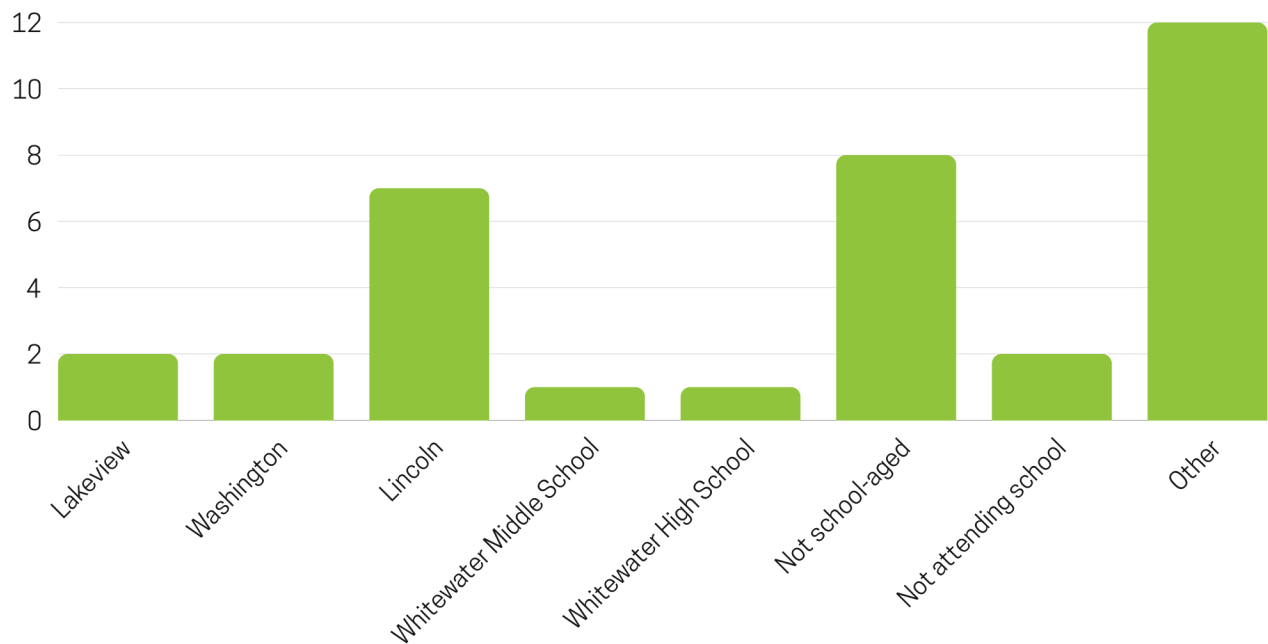
## How old are they?



## How long have they been at their current address?



## Where do they go to school?



# DEBUNKING THE ASSISTANCE MYTH

Although some state and federal assistance programs are available to support families facing financial barriers and, ultimately, homelessness, many programs do not support families living above the Federal Poverty Level. Those that do extend beyond that level, still do not provide enough support to fully meet the basic cost of living needs of local families.

**The simple fact is that our community is becoming less affordable for more and more families.**

The combination of stagnant wages, incredibly high rental rates, limited access to affordable childcare, inflation, lack of public transportation, and more has put local families in a position of never having enough to cover their basic cost of living expenses.

Monthly Income	\$2,763	Average monthly income of the six two-parent households we supported this quarter. Income reflects ONE working parent as the other was either the primary caretaker of their children, or medically unable to work.	
Household Survival Budget*			
Rent**	\$1,575	\$659	Subsidized housing/Section 8 voucher
Utilities	\$328	\$228	\$100 in Energy Assistance
Childcare*	\$1,328	\$0	only one child in care
Food	\$1,277	\$926	\$350.75 in FoodShare
Transportation	\$905	\$550	no car payment
Healthcare	\$759	\$0	all family members covered on BadgerCare
Technology	\$110	\$60	government phones
Misc. Items (school fees, household items, birthdays, etc.)	\$503	\$403	support from their school district & local pantries
TOTAL	\$6,785	\$2,826	
Balance each month	-\$4,022	-\$64	

*\*All expense data points provided by the 2022 ALICE Report from United Way of Wisconsin using 2021 point-in-time data from the City of Whitewater Household Survival Budget. Childcare, food & transportation costs have been updated to account for inflation since 2021 data*

*\*\*Average rent expense and all assistance data points are the average of Bethel House intake data from 2023 and the 1st quarter of 2024.*

**These budgets do not include the option to build a savings, plan for retirement, or accommodate for unexpected costs.**

# WHAT CAN THE WHITEWATER COMMON COUNCIL DO?

Bethel House appreciates all the Whitewater Common Council does to support our community, and we also recognize that its powers and influence are limited only to matters in which it has the statutory right to oversee and govern.

It is our goal that sharing this information leads to a stronger understanding of the financial barriers facing families in our communities so that if/when the Common Council has an opportunity to make decisions that could impact these families, their stories and this data are taken into account.

Specifically, we have three requests of the Common Council and City of Whitewater leadership:

- 1 Use Bethel House as a resource** for local data to support your work. Allow our organization to serve as a representative on behalf of the local families with lived experiences related to income inequality, the housing crisis, childcare deserts, etc. Consider the impact that your decisions may have on these families.
- 2 Utilize your position as a local elected official to advocate** at the state level for ALL local families in your community. Although we are proud of our work at Bethel House, we recognize it is almost always a temporary solution and that sustainable change will only be created at the policy level.  
  
For example, the state legislature recently fully cut Childcare Counts funding from the next biennial budget. We are already seeing that impact at the local level and know the ongoing impact will be detrimental to families already struggling to afford to support their families. That decision will absolutely lead to more parents being forced to leave the workforce.
- 3 Prioritize bringing affordable and market-rate housing to Whitewater.** One of the hardest parts of our job is finding affordable rental units in Whitewater for Bethel House families because living here has become increasingly unaffordable.

**The four most recent families who moved out of our Transitional Housing Program ALL had to leave Whitewater and enroll their children in other school districts because we could not secure affordable housing for them in this city.**

We greatly appreciate your time, thought, and consideration of all the families in the greater Whitewater community who are facing financial hardships.

We look forward to our continued working relationship with the City of Whitewater.