

COMMUNITY 2024 REPORT



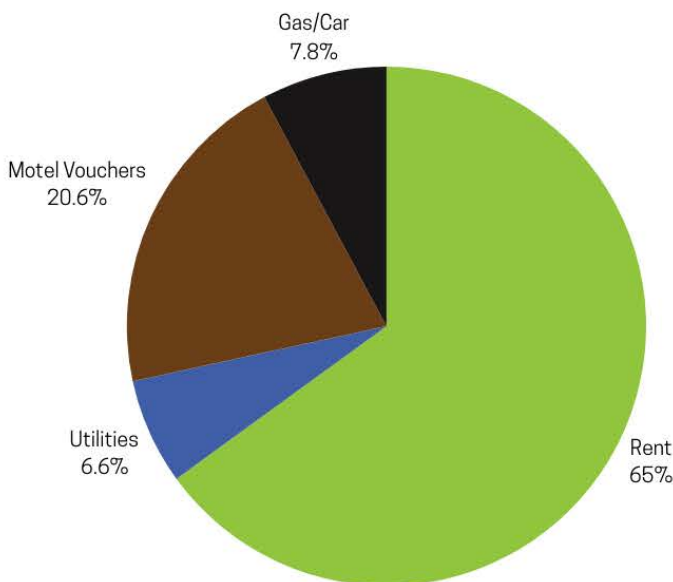
PURPOSE:

To present data from the Bethel House programs 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.

\$20,380

In 2024 we were able to support 70 families with financial assistance.

Through that support and the support of two other church partner programs, we stopped 24 evictions and kept children in our local schools.



Average monthly assistance of \$1,791.75

WHO ARE THESE 70 FAMILIES?

Connection to Whitewater

100%

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

Children under the age of 18

100%

All families who receive Bethel House assistance must also have primary custody of children under the age of 18. **140** children total under the age of 18.

Single-parent households

71%

Almost 3/4 of the families helped this quarter were single-parent households.

Employment Status

48%

Around half of the families we supported had at least one full-time working adult in the household.

Homeless

10%

Six of the 70 families we supported this quarter were considered homeless, either fully unhoused or doubling up.

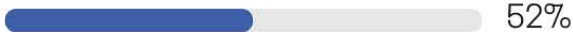
WHY ARE FAMILIES ASKING FOR HELP FROM BETHEL HOUSE?

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

No 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

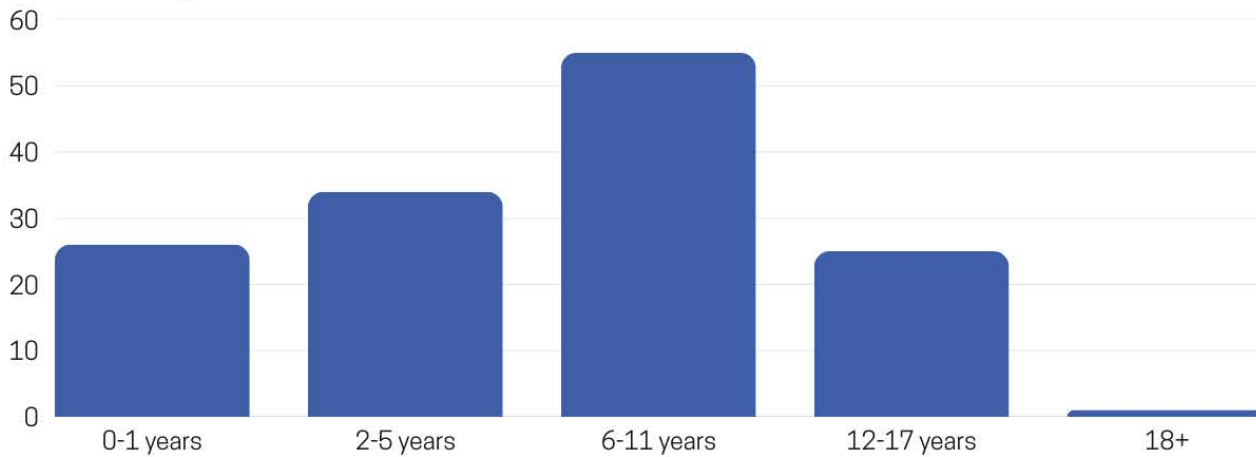


The most common reasons families seeking Bethel House assistance have lost their jobs have been issues with transportation (car wouldn't start, flat tire, lost transportation option) and missing too many days off for having to stay home with sick children (these families do not receive any paid-time-off).

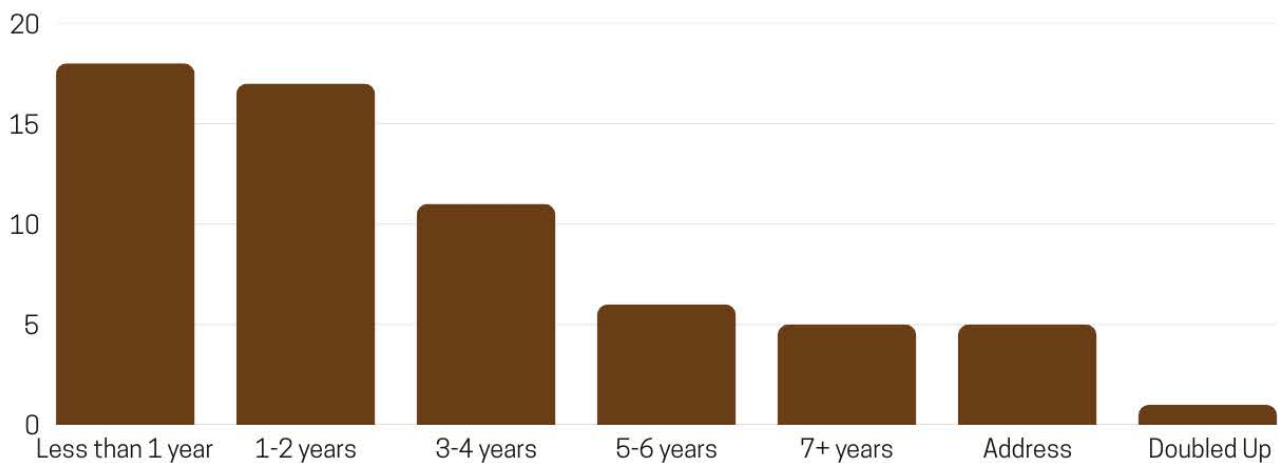
Wisconsin employers are not required to provide fringe benefits such as vacation, holiday, or sick pay.

MORE ABOUT THE CHILDREN IN THESE 70 FAMILIES :

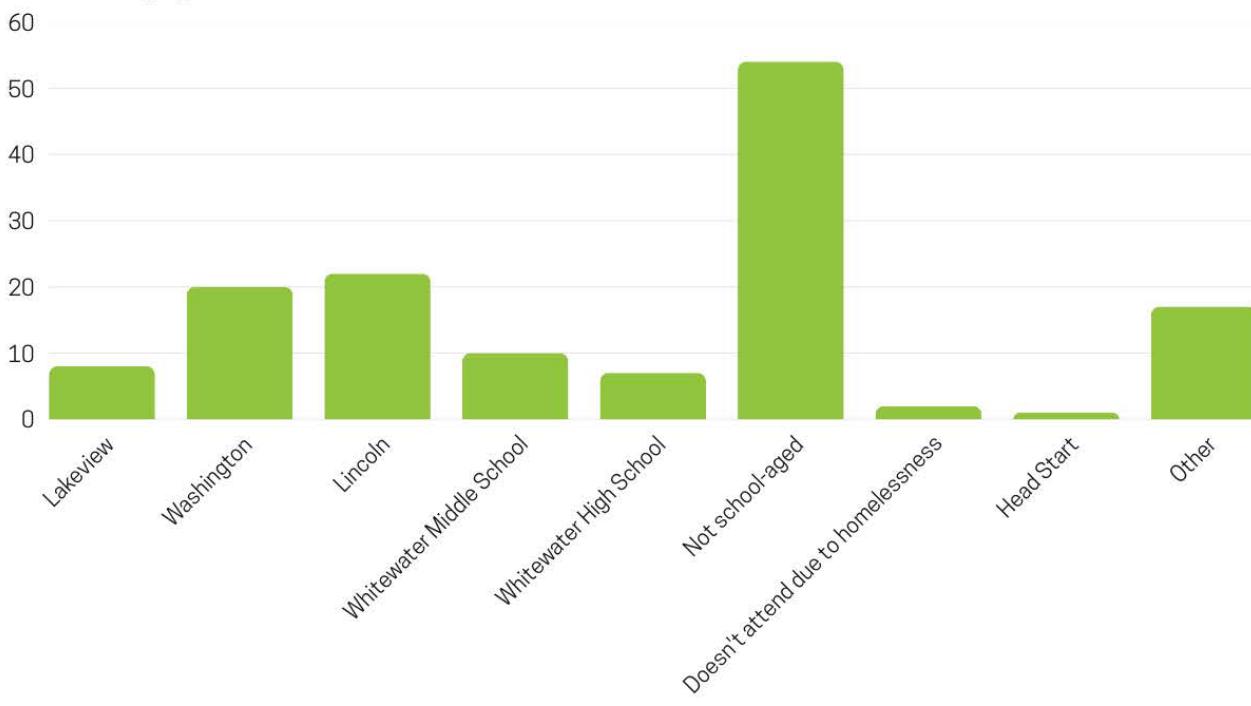
How old are they?



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.

**Out of the 3,937 households within the City of Whitewater, 58% fall under ALICE and poverty households.
Out of the 545 households within Whitewater town limits, 21% fall under ALICE and poverty households.**

Monthly Income	\$4,318	Average monthly income for households/families living in what is defined as 'poverty'. Households below the ALICE threshold, plus those in poverty can't afford the basic everyday essentials.	
Household Survival Budget*		With Assistance	
Rent**	\$1,575	\$659	Subsidized housing/Section 8 voucher
Utilities	\$310	\$210	\$100 in Energy Assistance
Childcare*	\$1,328	\$0	only one child in care
Food	\$1,235	\$885	\$350.75 in FoodShare
Transportation	\$1045	\$690	no car payment
Healthcare	\$638	\$0	all family members covered on BadgerCare
Technology	\$116	\$66	government phones
Misc. Items (school fees, household items, birthdays, etc.)	\$503	\$403	support from their school district & local pantries
TOTAL	\$6,750	\$2,913	
Balance each month	-\$2,432	-\$1,405	*Wage working full-time required to support this budget

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

**All assistance data points are the average of Bethel House intake data from 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 Wisconsin Child Care Counts Program, is facing funding elimination at the end of June 2025. The program, which provides stabilization payments to child care providers, is set to expire unless the state legislature approves continued funding in the next biennial budget. Child care providers and parents say the crisis they're facing due to high costs, long waitlists, and staffing shortages is likely going to worsen without additional state funding.

This will have an impact on families at the local level and 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 five 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.