



For Immediate Release

Date: September 14, 2020

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Couleecap Awarded \$450,000 Additional Funds for the Wisconsin Rental Assistance Program, W.R.A.P.

(Westby, WI) Couleecap has been awarded additional funding to support a highly successful eviction-prevention program for low-income residents experiencing income loss because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Wisconsin Rental Assistance Program, or W.R.A.P., is funded by the Wisconsin Department of Administration from dollars within the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Securities (CARES) Act.

In June, Couleecap was awarded \$797,654.00 to help at least 266 households by the end of October. Households could receive up to \$3000 in rental assistance or security deposits. By September 1, Couleecap had distributed 84 percent of those funds to aid 421 households and 199 landlords, far outpacing grant expectations.

“We knew we had to act fast so that people could avoid eviction and landlords could receive rent payments they depend on to pay bills and maintain their buildings,” said Hetti Brown, executive director of Couleecap. “Enabling people to keep their housing through unemployment is fundamental to COVID recovery. While eviction moratoriums are helpful, tenants are still responsible for paying rent at some point. Without this program, many families would be at risk of homelessness.”

The Couleecap W.R.A.P. program is part of a statewide initiative announced by Governor Tony Evers in June. Governor Evers allocated \$25 Million to help people with an income at or below 80% of the County Median Income (CMI) avoid eviction. The program has been administered through the Wisconsin Community Action Program, an association including 16 Community Action Agencies, like Couleecap, serving every county in Wisconsin.

“Renters are struggling. Unemployment benefits do not cover all expenses and when the federal unemployment supplement ended, many people lost the help they relied on,” says Kim Cable, Housing and Community Services Director. “This additional funding will ensure we can continue the program to help people in that situation.”



W.R.A.P. will continue through the end of October or until funds are fully utilized. Households making up to 80% CMI can apply to receive assistance. For a single person, 80% CMI ranges from \$39,700-\$43,050 and for a household of four ranges from \$56,650-\$61,450 depending on the county of residence. Applicants must be a Wisconsin resident who is not receiving other forms of housing assistance or a tenant of subsidized housing.

In addition to rental assistance, all applicants are automatically evaluated to receive state energy assistance, and Couleecap case managers will provide help with household budgeting, program referrals with application assistance, and other social service support.

People must complete an application at www.couleecap.org to receive assistance. Persons without internet access may apply by calling 608-455-0198. Due to a high call volume, applications submitted online may receive a faster response.

The W.R.A.P. initiative is just one of many programs Couleecap has launched in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Couleecap has been providing financial and other forms of assistance to people with reduced income, small business owners, and people left under-served by other programs. Couleecap continues to fundraise to provide these services and hopes to add new services as new needs are identified during COVID-19 recovery. Those wishing to support these efforts can donate at www.couleecap.org or by mailing contributions to 201 Melby Street, Westby, WI 54667.

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About Couleecap

Couleecap, Inc. is a private non-profit 501c3 charitable organization. Couleecap helps people in need with housing food, transportation, and more. Created in 1966, we are a community action program that fights poverty and promotes self-sufficiency in Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties. Couleecap is a member of the Community Action Network, originally created in 1964. Learn more at couleecap.org.