



**“No child that came through our doors went unsheltered this winter,”
-Abbi Jeffers,
Couleecap**

Collaboration with our Partners is Key to Keeping Families with Children Sheltered

During the winter of 2023, Couleecap collaborated with several La Crosse area partners to help keep families with children sheltered through the cold months.

“No child that came through our doors went unsheltered this winter,” Couleecap’s Coordinated Entry Manager, Abbi Jeffers explained of the program titled “Family Winter Shelter Program.”

The program worked to help create the most spaces available for unsheltered people in the area by allowing agencies at the REACH Center to focus on sheltering families. In turn, the Salvation Army shelter was able to shift their attention to single individuals, thus, making the most of all the spaces available.

The Family Winter Sheltering program was the first of its kind in the Coulee Region, where the REACH Center serves as a multi-agency, one-stop location for people experiencing housing and economic insecurity.

“The program served families with children who would have been or were evicted during the fall or the early winter months,” Nicole Ellefson, a Housing Stability Case Manager with Couleecap.

Abbi explained that she and team members from participating agencies were available two days a week for walk-in service. “On those days, families could come to the REACH Center where we would get a basic understanding of their situation, needs, and proceed to work through the options that were available to them. Through creativity, brainstorming and collaboration, many, many families were able to be sheltered.”

Sometime the service team could help identify safe places for families to stay without going into temporary shelter. For families who needed shelter, they were provided it in local motels. “This program also speaks to our great relationships with motel staff and owners,” Nicole noted. “People were able to get into these spaces the day of with our collection. We would call them, and a family could be in a motel that afternoon.”

“Collaboration of everyone consistently showing up and focusing on how we can best serve these people in the moment was a huge take away for me,” Abbi noted of the program.

Through the course of the program, families were also connected to these agencies to help work on successful housing following the programs end in spring.

Agencies involved in this program included, LAFC for funding and case management, Couleecap/WERA for coordinated entry, funding and case management, YMCA for case management, local school districts, New Horizons and Salvation Army who assisted with informing of bed availability, as well as Independent Living Resources who assisted with case management.

Couleecap
your local community *action* program



A United Way member agency

A equal opportunity employer and service provider.
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Our Mission

Couleecap fights poverty and promotes self-sufficiency, economic development, and social justice. We are **People Helping People**, and every day our actions make a difference in the lives of people and families throughout the Coulee Region.