



Brown County United Way

# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **\$1 million federal appropriation enabling Brown County United Way to establish a first-of-its-kind neighborhood community house in Green Bay**

### ***Sen. Tammy Baldwin joins Brown County United Way in making announcement***

GREEN BAY—With the help of a \$1 million appropriation from the federal government, Brown County United Way is set to create a first-of-its-kind for Green Bay neighborhood community house designed to help the residents of four near east-side neighborhoods.

Senator Tammy Baldwin worked to secure the appropriation, the largest grant ever received by Brown County United Way. Senator Baldwin helped make the announcement of the grant on Wednesday during a news conference at the Brown County United Way offices. The appropriation is part of the bipartisan Omnibus Appropriations Legislation for Fiscal Year 2022 that was recently passed.

The neighborhoods to be served by the community house are Downtown, Joannes Park, Navarino and Whitney Park. Once completed it will offer services such as job training, financial literacy, parenting, housing and mental health support.

“Brown County United Way believes place matters,” said Robyn Davis, the organization’s president and CEO. “When we refreshed our strategic direction in 2018, we identified place-based strategies as an important, proven way to improve outcomes for neighborhoods identified as vulnerable and at risk. This neighborhood community house is a crucial next step in our plan to revitalize the neighborhoods we’ve identified as being a high risk.”

“The Neighborhood Community House is an important step forward in revitalizing under-resourced neighborhoods in Green Bay,” said Senator Baldwin. “I was proud to bring home support from Washington to Wisconsin and deliver \$1 million for Brown County United Way to accelerate this project. After two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, this investment will bring people together, while providing essential support for employment, financial literacy and mental health.”

Davis says the planned community house will provide a central place for neighborhood residents to gather, support and learn from one another, gain streamlined services, and foster a greater sense of belonging where they live, work and play. Partners supporting the federal appropriation are Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin, Howe Community Resource Center, NeighborWorks Green Bay, and the City of Green Bay.



#### Brown County United Way

According to the 2020 “ALICE in Wisconsin: A Financial Hardship Study” one in three Brown County residents struggle to meet basic needs. These households live below the ALICE threshold – equating to more than 35,000 households that are either below the federal poverty level, or just above it and are asset limited, income constrained, and employed – or ALICE. In the city of Green Bay, 48 percent of all households are below the threshold. The four target neighborhoods are among the most economically challenged, diverse areas in the city.

Davis says the idea for the neighborhood community house came from significant research that included asset mapping and census data, as well as listening to the needs of the neighborhood residents through community conversations, stakeholder meetings and surveys.

The neighborhood community house concept originated from early social reform efforts of the late 1800s. Called settlement houses, these community resources were located within impoverished neighborhoods and employed social workers and recruited residents to teach skills in trades, vocations and adult education. Childcare, youth education, health care and cultural and recreational activities were also common.

“We’re envisioning a one-stop shop co-created by neighborhood residents, with vital services and activities tailored to address the challenges and opportunities present within these neighborhoods,” said Davis. “Our goal is to improve neighborhood cohesion, growth and vitality.”

Previous work in these neighborhoods by Brown County United Way includes teaming up with the Green Bay Area Public School District and other community partners to establish Howe Elementary as a community school in 2018 and launching a Neighborhood Partnership Grant program in 2020 to provide mini grants to nonprofits and the neighborhood associations to support innovative projects that strengthen neighborhoods.

The \$1 million appropriation will be matched with local funding to purchase and renovate a building as well as support the development of programming. The site of the community house has not yet been determined.

This neighborhood community house announcement comes on the heels of another initiative Brown County United Way is working on: the Mobile Resource Connector program. That project, which received a \$999,737 grant from the state of Wisconsin, aims to bring services to people throughout Brown County where they live and work through the mobile resources of a passenger van, an RV and a converted semi-truck and trailer.

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**About Brown County United Way:** Founded in 1925, Brown County United Way ([www.browncountyunitedway.org](http://www.browncountyunitedway.org)) is a center for community-based strategies. Through direct fundraising, grant making, community mobilization, and advocacy efforts, Brown County United Way leverages all of its organizational resources and deep local partnerships to advance targeted community solutions. With the help of more than 500 community volunteers from all community sectors, Brown County United Way is dedicated to finding solutions to the community’s most pressing human-services issues.