

# Grant could extend MORE Program

Initiative aims to match donations with \$10K grant

By Paul Srubas  
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The successes of a program to extend mental health services to the homeless have garnered it a grant to continue its work for another two years, according to its director.

The Mental Health Outreach Resource Expansion Program, known as the MORE Program, sends a therapist and an advanced practice nurse practitioner to participating homeless shelters to provide services to individuals there.

It has been operating for the last 2½ years under a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Venture Basic Needs Giving Partnership, a partnership of the U.S. Venture and Keller Family foundations.

The partnership awards grants that encourage innovation and cooperation among individuals and agencies working toward the betterment of communities in Brown County and the Fox River Valley.

The MORE Program qualifies in part because it represents a cooperative effort by the American Foundation of Counseling Services, Bellin

## TO HELP

To donate to the MORE Program, send a check to the American Foundation of Counseling Services, 130 E. Walnut St., Green Bay, WI 54301, or go to [www.americanfoundationonline.com](http://www.americanfoundationonline.com), click on the "donate" button and follow instructions.

Hospital, the NEW Community Shelter, the NEW Community Clinic, St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter, Golden House and House of Hope.

A therapist from American Foundation of Counseling Services and a nurse from Bellin Hospital visit the other agencies on a regular basis to provide onsite counseling and medication to the agencies' residents and clients with mental health issues.

The program has helped many of its clients move from homelessness to more permanent housing and brought them to a point of being able to secure an income, according to Bob Johnson, executive director of American Foundation for Counseling Services.

In 2010, the only year in which data is available, 29 percent of the 211 clients participating in the program obtained housing and 15 percent obtained income.

Twenty-two clients who had at least three therapy sessions and at least two

who received medication follow-up services responded well enough to obtain their own housing. That's roughly half of the clients who took advantage of sessions and services, Johnson said.

Many of the program's clients need more mental health help than what a few sessions can offer, Johnson said. But even those clients benefited and half of those participating showed a reduction in mental illness symptoms on formal measuring scales.

A harder success to measure, but one that is particularly important, Johnson said, is that most of the participating clients show an increased willingness to continue services or link up with other service providers.

That's key, because homeless people with mental health issues often have a fear or mistrust of mental health workers and services, Johnson said.

The new grant will allow the program to continue and possibly expand to include other homeless shelters over the next two years, Johnson said. One expansion plan includes trying to continue to work with St. John's shelter clients during the summer months, when the shelter is closed for the season. Staying in touch with those clients means better

continuity, necessary to continue improvements in clients' health, Johnson said.

However, the \$100,000 is a matching grant, which means the program won't receive the money unless it can raise that much on its own.

Johnson said the program organizers hope to do that through local, state and national foundations, but they'll also seek individual donations from throughout the community.

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