

Families First of Monroe County

2015 Annual Report



As an active member of the Monroe County community, Families First supports and assists residents through their life and financial challenges with respectful and empowering services.

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Mission:

As an active member of the Monroe County community, Families First supports and assists residents through their financial and life challenges with respectful and empowering services.

Agency:

Families first was incorporated as a charitable 501(c)3, nonprofit agency in July 1996. The agency development was the result of collaboration amongst members of the Monroe County Planning Council, who sought to create an entity serving as a resource and referral point of contact for residents of Monroe County.

Over time, Families First of Monroe County grew to include additional services including transportation programming, household goods distribution, as well as the Monroe County provider of Emergency Shelter voucher assistance. Families First became a Great Rivers United Way Community Partner agency in 2012, expanding services to include Case/ Care Management and Safe and Stable Housing programming.

Families First continues to offer Case Management and budget consultation services to any interested members of Monroe County. Additionally, Families First seeks to support individuals and households living in/ near poverty.

Governance:

Families First is governed by a voluntary board of Directors who impart a wide variety of experience through both professional background and community service.

2015 Families First of Monroe County Board of Directors	
Officers:	Directors:
President: Theresa Burns- Gilbert	Barbara Clinard
Vice President: Mary Busching	Krishna Battista
Treasurer: Spencer Stephens	Sandy Murray
Secretary: Karen Wall	Jenny McCoy
	Mark Pierce
	Dean Clarence-Brooks
	Andrea Kliora

2015 Programs and Services

Basic Needs

Families First seeks to address the most immediate needs of those we serve. It is a reality within our communities that many households are forced to make difficult decisions to ensure basic needs are met for their family.

Families First seeks to provide services that allow households to maximize their resources. In 2015 Families First provided assistance for basic needs in the following areas.

Infant Supplies to Families in Need

The cost of diapers and baby wipes can be a daunting addition to household finances. With the generous support of community donations Families First provides such materials to families. In 2015, 153 households were provided infant supplies through Families First at a value of \$2,131.



Basic Needs	Households Served	Children	Value
Infant Supplies	153	226	\$2,131

Utility Support

Many of us may take for granted a warm home, or running water. These essentials are often costly to maintain for families with limited income. Families First provides financial assistance to clients facing disconnection of essential utilities such as water and electric. Financial support is also provided for the purchase/ refill of heating fuel needed to maintain warmth in the home. In 2015 Families First assisted 58 households facing loss of this most basic of needs.

Basic Needs	Households Served	Children	Adults	Individuals	Value
Utility Support	58	83	75	158	\$8,948

Clothing

Families First continues to offer essential clothing items such as children’s winter coats, hats, gloves and scarves to those without. Adult and child sized blankets are also provided through the winter months to those in need of additional warmth.

Basic Needs	Households Served	Children	Adults	Individuals	Value
Clothing	52	56	35	91	\$1,402

Basic Needs Continued

Household Goods

In 2014 Families First partnered with Goodwill of North Central Wisconsin to become a member of the Good Neighbor Program. Through this collaborative effort, Families First is able to provide Goodwill Store merchandise vouchers to households in need of purchasing additional clothing, shoes and household items. Many families provided Goodwill vouchers utilized the resource for back to school clothing for their children. Such collaboration is essential for a small agency to ensure resources are available through a variety of services and funding sources.



"Our Business is Changing Lives"

Basic Needs	Households Served	Children	Adults	Individuals	Value
Goodwill	237	346	347	693	\$17,325

Miscellaneous Needs

Families First maintains flexibility in services as determined by the needs of each individual client we serve. Short term emergency shelter, emergency food assistance and even transportation are an infrequent, but mission supported service!

Basic Needs	Households Served	Children	Adults	Individuals	Value
Misc.	11	12	13	25	\$539

Employment Support

A new job can be an overwhelming but essential to stability. Families First supports clients obtaining employment with work required items such as steel-toed boots, uniform dress clothes and even prescription safety glasses. Families First also assists with the initial cost of fuel for new employment until the first pay check is received.

Basic Needs	Households Served	Children	Adults	Individuals	Value
Employment	19	22	23	55	\$766

Christmas Program

In 2015 Families First partnered with the Tomah Police Department to support families around the holidays. Through the Police Departments Giving Tree, 14 households who completed the Safe and Stable Housing program throughout the year received Christmas gifts from generous community donors. In total 36 children received additional Christmas cheer!



Case Care Management Program

Families First seeks to not only address the immediate basic needs of those we serve, but also work toward developing long lasting tools and skills contributing to ongoing stability. All direct financial assistance areas provided at Families First are complemented by a Case management component that can be tailored to individual needs and areas of instability.

Families First values the partnership with Great Rivers United Way. With this relationship, Families First is able to fund Case Management activities through the Case Care Management program.

Component: Financial Literacy

Financial Literacy is an invaluable skill regardless of income level and resources. For low income households facing poverty, increasing financial management skills may mean the difference between maintaining electricity in the home, or avoiding an eviction notice. Through one on one budgeting sessions, clients at Families First discuss areas of income and expense, developing a picture of the current household finances.



Component: Mainstream Resource and Referral

Families First serves as a resource and referral point of contact for clients seeking services. In many cases, members of our communities may need assistance, or information, on available services that are already in existence. Families First received hundreds of calls and in person client contacts seeking information in existing programs and support services in 2015.

2015 Frequent Referrals and Recommendations

1. Local Food Pantry and State of Wisconsin, Food share programs
2. Income Based Housing Programs/ Housing Authority
3. Wisconsin Heating Assistance Program (WHEAP)
4. CouleeCap Inc., Homeless Service Providers
5. Workforce Connections, W2 Programming
6. Legal Guidance/ Tennant Resource programs
7. Health and Human Service County Department programs



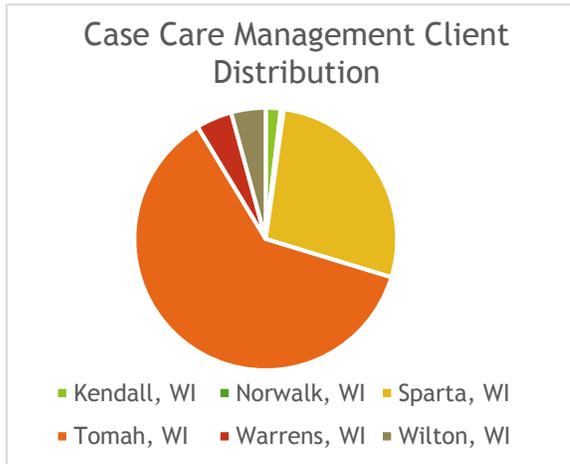
Component: Skill Building

Case/ Care management programming further seeks to address basic education components including reading and understanding lease agreements, communicating with landlords, locating and securing housing, reading and understanding utility bills and searching and securing employment or transportation.

These basic skills can present challenges to clients facing one or more barriers to stability including, prior homelessness, domestic violence survivor, lack of High School Education, Parole/ Probation Status, Physical/ Mental challenges, or those without reliable transportation.

In 2015, more than 300 people were provided Case management services at Families First which includes standardized intake meeting, budget consultation and mainstream resources in addition to any direct financial assistance that may be necessary to stabilize a life, or financial challenge.

2015	Households	Children	Adults	Individuals
Case Management	109	173	150	323



Safe and Stable Housing Program

Families First has provided Homeless Prevention Program services in Monroe County since 2014. This program is intended to support clients at imminent risk (14 days, or less) of losing their primary night time residence/ stable housing. This is most frequently the case when households have been served an eviction notice that requires them to cure rent past due, or face eviction proceedings. This may also be the circumstance for an individual, or household who is precariously housed with family, or friends.

Households facing imminent loss of Stable Housing are considered “at risk” of homelessness. The intent of the Safe and Stable Housing program is to provide stabilizing services to avoid a literally homeless situation, in which the household is forced to seek emergency homeless shelter, or reside in a place not meant for safe human habitation (car, park, and campground).

Clients eligible for this program meet the following criteria, increasing the likelihood that failure to provide services would result in homelessness:

1. Clients income is less than 30% that of the County Median Income
A family of three would be earning no more than \$20,090 annually
2. Clients face one or more barriers to stability including prior homelessness, domestic violence survivor, physical/ mental disability, lack of high school education, transportation difficulties and families with more than five members.
3. Clients must provide documentation of a temporary decrease in income, or a circumstance which has caused them to fall behind on their rent temporarily. This may be the result from unexpected loss of hours from employment, illness/ hospitalization of a member of the family, or even a large car repair that was needed for continue transportation to employment.

Clients participating in the Safe and Stable Housing program receive short term rental assistance in the form of Families First to Landlord payment of rental arrears, security deposit, or first month rent for new housing. Program participants may receive 1-3 months of short term assistance, intended to stabilize the housing crisis.

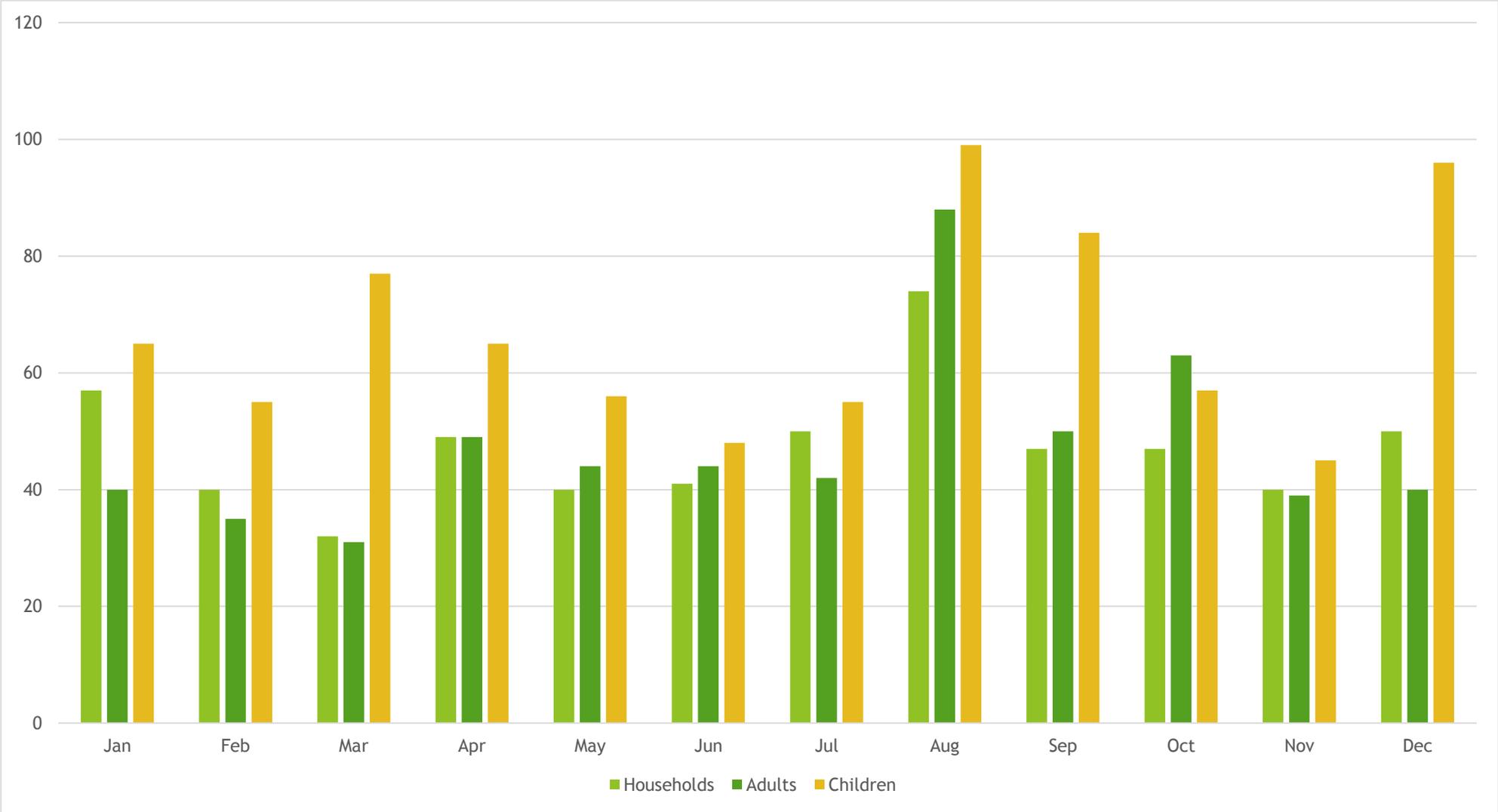
In addition to direct rental assistance, the program offers a housing case management component that includes tenant/ landlord communication, tenant rights advocacy, eviction process education, budget consultation, habitability inspection as well as housing sustainability planning.

The Case management component intends to develop skills and knowledge so that households will be less likely to become at risk of homelessness in the future.

2015 Safe and Stable Housing Client Assistance

Rental Deposit	\$7,303
First Month's Rent	\$4,381
Rental Arrears Payment	\$14,893.69
Total	\$26,577.69

2015 Clients Served



Expenses	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Households	57.00	40.00	32.00	49.00	40.00	41.00	50.00	74.00	47.00	47.00	40.00	50.00	567.00
Adults	40.00	35.00	31.00	49.00	44.00	44.00	42.00	88.00	50.00	63.00	39.00	40.00	565.00
Children	65.00	55.00	77.00	65.00	56.00	48.00	55.00	99.00	84.00	57.00	45.00	96.00	802.00
Total	105.00	90.00	101.00	114.00	100.00	92.00	97.00	187.00	134.00	167.00	124.00	186.00	1497

Community Involvement

Families First seeks to be an active member of communities throughout Monroe County. As a small nonprofit agency, it is vital to be actively engaged with partners and clients to ensure that the agency and services are both familiar and available to those we serve. Families First staff members appreciated the opportunity to speak with the following groups in 2015 and share the work of our agency.

The United Methodist Woman of Tomah
Tomah Child Development Days
The United Methodist Church of Tomah
Norwalk Child Development Days
Sparta Child Development Days
Tomah National Night Out
Retired Federal Employees Union, Tomah
Tomah Rotary Club
Monroe County Senior Expo
Hunger and Homelessness Dinner
Tomah School District Poverty Simulation
Trane Company United Way Day



Partner Involvement

Families First is proud to serve Monroe County Residents alongside numerous partners. Continued collaborative efforts ensure Families First is providing efficient and effective services in concert with additional existing resources. Families First partner involvement also allows staff members to obtain the most current training and information within the social service world.

Great Rivers United Way

Families First is a community partner with the Great Rivers United Way. Through this partnership, Families First provides both Case/ Care Management and Safe and Stable Housing programming.



Monroe County Planning Council

Families First actively participates in the activities of the Monroe County Planning Council. This collaborative effort brings members of county government departments, faith based organizations and nonprofit partners for regular education, service updates and community needs discussions. Such collaborations work to address unmet needs and eliminate duplication of services.

Monroe County Housing Coalition

The Housing Coalition strives to provide Monroe County residents with information regarding fair housing, emergency Shelter Solutions and community advocacy and education. This coalition was very active in 2015 capping the year with a community Hunger and Homelessness awareness Dinner in November.



Salvation Army Satellite Service Site

Families First served as a Salvation Army Satellite service agency throughout 2015. Through this partnership, Salvation Army emergency funds are made available to individuals in need for basic shelter, transportation, food and utility assistance. These resources are paired with Families First Case Management and resource referral services.



DOING THE MOST GOOD

Wisconsin Balance of State- Continuum of Care

Homeless Service providers throughout the State of Wisconsin, receiving funding through the Housing and Urban Development Department, comprise this group with efforts to ensure consistent service delivery to homeless members throughout the state of Wisconsin. Families First participates with this group as a Sub-recipient of funding intended to provide Homeless Prevention Services to those at risk of becoming Homeless.



Annual Fundraiser

Families First holds a single annual fundraiser in the month of March. In March 2015 Families First held the 5th Annual Trivia Night Contest at the Monroe County Fairgrounds. The event occurs in the form of a ten round, team trivia contest with participants joining from local businesses, service clubs, partner agencies and the general community.

Thirty-four teams of more than three-hundred participants competed in the 2015 event. Team "Smash 407" took home the traveling trophy as this year's champions.

Proceeds from this event totaled more than \$15,000 which will be used throughout the year to support Families First programs and operations.



Families First of Monroe County, Inc.
Statement of Financial Position (Consolidated)
October 31, 2015

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash	\$ 92,246.00
Grants and Receivables	\$ 23,306.00
Inventory	\$ 3,962.00
Prepaid Expenses	<u>\$ 2,304.00</u>
Total Assets	<u><u>\$ 121,818.00</u></u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$ 911.00
Accrued Expenses	<u>\$ 1,710.00</u>
Total Liabilities	\$ 2,621.00

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$ 105,363.00
Temporarily Restricted	<u>\$ 13,834.00</u>
Total Net Assets	<u><u>\$ 119,197.00</u></u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u><u>\$ 121,818.00</u></u>

Families First of Monroe County, Inc.
Statement of Activities (Consolidated)
Year Ended October 31, 2015

REVENUES, GAINS, AND PUBLIC SUPPORT	
Contracts, Grants, and Contributions	\$117,402
Special Events	\$17,461
Contributed Goods	\$19,182
Investment Income	\$81
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	<u>\$0</u>
Total Revenues, Gains and Public Support	\$154,126
EXPENSES	
Program Services	\$123,022
Fundraising	\$2,226
Management and General	<u>\$11,135</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$136,383</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$17,743
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	<u>\$101,454</u>
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	<u><u>\$119,197</u></u>