Housing

Spring 2024 Progress Report

Every Child Thrives is a collaborative network of 60+ active and engaged community partners, whose vision is to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive in health, learning and life. Every Child Thrives aligns the work and resources of many organizations (including Foundation strategic investments) to support three priority areas: Strong Families, Kindergarten Readiness and School Success.

PRIORITY:

Strong Families

STRATEGY:

Weave a web of support for young children and their families

WHY INVEST?

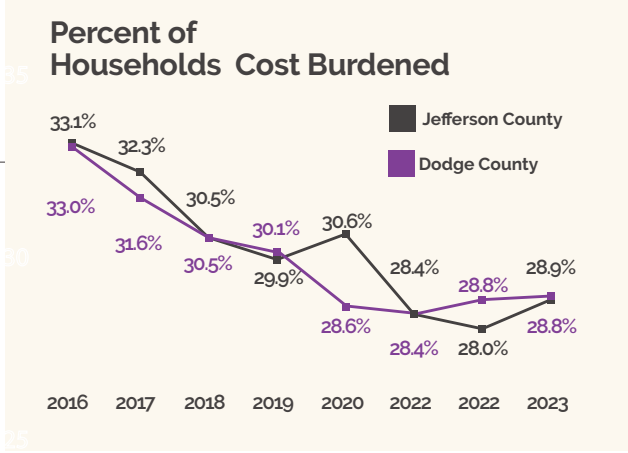
All families need access to safe and affordable housing. "Lack of safe, affordable housing has been linked to poor economic, health, and socio-economic outcomes, as well as negative academic and behavioral outcomes for children." - Why Housing Matters for Upward Mobility.

Across Jefferson and Dodge Counties, housing is neither available nor affordable. Our vision: Everyone who works in or contributes to our communities should be able to live here.

INDICATOR

Households are considered "cost burdened" if they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Cost-burdened households have little left over each month to spend on other necessities such as food, clothing, utilities, and health care.

- Between 2020 and 2024, local home sale prices rose 44%.
- Even without population growth, an additional 3,300 housing units are needed to maintain our existing population, largely because households today contain fewer people than in the past.
- 30% of regional families are housing cost burdened, meaning housing expenses equal more than 30% of their annual income.



Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation

The Foundation equips community change leaders with the tools they need to build strong families and thriving communities, fostering transformative change by supporting local organizations in learning, growing, collaborating and moving their missions further.

Provided a $1.25M low-interest loan to Dodge County Housing Authority to support creation of 40 additional housing units in Juneau and Lowell.

This project was made possible only through regional collaboration:

- $10M+ in state funding
- Grant from Dodge County
- Land donation from Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation and Specialty Cheese
- Incentives from communities of Juneau and Lowell
- Low-interest loan from the Foundation

Invested $2M in Jefferson County "Live Local Fund" - a revolving loan fund to provide gap financing to attract developers, creating an additional 500 new housing units.

Supporting ThriveED's capacity as Jefferson County's housing champion.

In its role, ThriveED will:

- Provides technical assistance, education and advocacy for municipalities,
- Lead developer outreach and identify build ready sites.
- Offers home buyer counseling and education for buyers/owners at or below 80% Area Median Income.

Partnering with the City of Watertown to develop 700+ housing units on the Collective campus.

Development has begun for Phase 1 of a 48-acre model neighborhood offering a full continuum of housing—bringing people of all ages together in a walkable, connected community that showcases the area's natural beauty.

The Foundation is actively engaging the community, decision-makers, and developers to begin a Phase II 188 unit housing development.

Building regional capacity to advocate for policies and financing resources that support rural housing development. Initiate additional housing partnerships as opportunities arise.

Learn more about our work on Housing at our website:
watertownhealthfoundation.com.

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