



History

Operation HELP traces its beginnings to 1982 when Bob and Mary Nasvik and a small group of Hudson volunteers created a Christmas Campaign to ensure that local children from low-income families would receive gifts during the holidays. That program has continued annually ever since and this past year provided gifts for 508 kids from nearly 200 families. Over the years, Operation HELP began addressing additional needs in the community including emergency financial assistance for rent, utility or car repair bills. In 1990, Operation HELP formally incorporated as a 501(c)(3) and in 2011 merged with The SOURCE which operated a resource center where area residents can meet one-on-one with volunteers who provide support, basic necessities, referrals, and assistance in a safe and respectful place.

Mission

The mission of Operation HELP is to help residents of St. Croix County maintain stable living situations, emotional well-being, and personal dignity when they experience temporary financial hardships. Operation HELP accomplishes this through:

- Emergency financial assistance for car repair/gas, rent, utilities, and temporary hotel shelter.
- Access to personal items, connections to community resources, and emotional support in the Resource Center
- Addressing the unique needs of children through the Christmas and diaper programs.

The purpose of these services is to help families and individuals remain in their homes and employed. Stable housing and employment empower individuals to be financially self-sufficient and prevent further dependence on social systems.

Current programs and activities

Operation HELP's programs and activities currently include:

Emergency Financial Assistance—Help with rent, utility and car repair expenses. Applications can be completed online through the Operation HELP website or done over the phone.

Resource Center—Basic necessities such as socks and underwear, toiletries, pet food, diapers, and other items plus vouchers for gas, food, and clothing.

Diaper Bank—Part of the Resource Center, monthly supplies diapers and wipes are provided to families with young children.

Temporary Emergency Shelter—One to three days of emergency lodging may be provided for people facing health or safety risks due to lack of housing.

Budgeting Classes—Regular classes are to help clients understand and take charge of their household income and expense challenges.

Christmas for Kids—Each October, hundreds of kids from the Hudson School District are matched with generous sponsors who purchase presents and help make the holidays a little brighter.

Connections to Additional Help—Operation HELP works with food, employment, and housing organizations for additional solutions to financial and basic needs challenges.

Need

St. Croix County which is among the fastest growing counties in the state of Wisconsin. Total population of the county is more than 95,000 and has been growing each year. Nearly one-third of residents in the county live below the poverty threshold or have household income less than the basic cost of living. The cost of living is high and rising while wages have not kept pace. Because of this, many families are just getting by. When a family is faced with a financial emergency, there is no capacity to deal with the unplanned expense.

According to Wisconsin 211 Social Determinants of Health Dashboard, "housing" ranks number 1 among the top five categories of most requested services in St. Croix County. Utility assistance ranks number three of five. Within the housing category, rent payment assistance out-ranked the next highest need (community shelters) by nearly two-to-one.

2022 Service Summary

In the 12 months ending September 30, 2023, Operation HELP provided financial assistance totaling \$236,156 to 437 households throughout St. Croix County. During this time period, Operation HELP's Resource Center received 1,693 visits from families and individuals seeking basic needs items. The Resource Center distributed more than 4,400 food and clothing vouchers; 4,206 toiletry and hygiene items; 2,181 pairs of socks or underwear for men, and children; nearly 2,000 packages of diapers and wipes, 1,124 bags or cans of pet food; 946 laundry vouchers; and 869 gas vouchers. 849 households received assistance benefitting 2,126 St. Croix County residents. The average household size was approximately 2.5 people. 46 percent of households had children under the age of 18; 26 percent had children age 5 or younger. 72 percent of clients served were female. 22 percent of clients identified as persons of color. Approximately 50 percent of clients reported household income at or below federal poverty guidelines. (Detailed service summary tables attached.)

Impact of Activities

The goal of Operation HELP services is to be a temporary bridge for our clients facing temporary financial hardship. To be eligible for emergency financial assistance, applicants must have or anticipate an ongoing source of income and are expected to contribute as much as possible toward the amount(s) due. These programs prevent clients from slipping further into eviction or homelessness. The purpose of these services is to help families and individuals remain in their existing homes and employment situations.

Partners and Service Networking

Operation HELP has long-standing collaborations with several other nonprofit organizations in St. Croix County who provide complementary or supplementary services. These include the Hudson Food Pantry and Hudson Backpack; Our Neighbor's Place; Grace Place/The Salvation Army; WestCAP; ARC (Assistance and Resource Center); Food Harvest; St. Croix County Public

Health; Hudson School District; and Hudson Area Ministerial Association. In addition to these formal relationships Operation HELP also participates in the Hudson Chamber Nonprofit Roundtable, listservs, and other regular communication with an informal network of dozens of area nonprofits including YMCA, Turning Point, Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley, Workforce Resource, Aging and Disability Resource Center of St. Croix County among others.

Number of board members, full-time paid staff, part-time paid staff, and volunteers

Operation HELP is staffed by a .75 FTE executive director, a full-time program manager, and a part-time bookkeeper. Operation HELP also relies heavily on more than 50 volunteers who provide direct client service 17 hours each week at the Resource Center office and fill other vital functions such as serving on the board and committees, coordinating the annual Christmas for Kids campaign, assisting with communications, fundraising, and other activities. In 2020, volunteers contributed approximately 1,700 hours of their time.

Need for Community Support

Operation HELP relies on the generosity of foundations, churches, businesses, clubs and organization, and individuals for funds used to provide rent, utility, and car repair assistance. By bringing together private donations for emergency financial assistance, Operation HELP is able to remain flexible to client needs without restrictive guidelines and conditions that often accompany public funding. Financial assistance grants typically ranged from less than \$50 for utility payments to more than \$600 for rent and utilities. The average amount of assistance is about \$444. For others, vouchers for gas, laundry services and food help stretch monthly household budgets. In addition to financial donations, many local groups and businesses conduct charity drives to help keep Operation HELP’s Resource Center supplied with basic need items.

Board of Directors

Bjorn Nesvold, Chair

Partner, Wealth Advisor
Landmark Wealth Management

Jean Schneider, Vice-Chair

Retired Teacher, Hudson School District

Wes Caine, Treasurer

Retired CPA/Partner, Chicago CPA firm

Margaret Wopat, Assistant Treasurer

Retired Educator

Diana Berg, Secretary

Retired Director of Continuing Ed,
Northwestern Health Sciences University

Heidi Becken

Volunteer, former Business Analyst,
Northwest Airlines

Mary Blanchard

Retired VP, Ameriprise Financial

Christine Carufel

VP/Branch Banking Director, First State
Bank and Trust Hudson

Rachel Daix

Operation HELP Volunteer

Angela Kulzer

Owner, RiverLink Staffing, Inc. and Farmers
Insurance Agency, New Richmond

Steve Wilcox

President, Resultants for Business, Inc

Key Staff

Tim Puffer, Executive Director, joined Operation HELP as its first executive director in September 2019. Tim has worked in the nonprofit sector for more than 30 years and has extensive experience in fundraising, marketing, communications, strategic planning and program development. He has held senior management positions with several Minneapolis-Saint Paul area nonprofits and served as a consultant to dozens of small and medium size nonprofits in Minnesota including a number of organizations working in areas of human services and basic needs. He has a degree in communications and business from the University of St. Thomas and has served in leadership positions on a number of nonprofit boards.

Operation HELP Contact Information:

Executive Director: Tim Puffer

Phone: (715) 577-0693

Email: operationhelp.tim@gmail.com

Board Chair: Bjorn Nesvold

Mailing Address: 901 Fourth Street, Suite 214, Hudson, WI 54016

Resource Center office: (715) 386-1300

Website: www.operationhelpstcroix.org

EIN/Tax ID #39-1711703

Operation HELP
Statements of Activity - Actual vs Budget
For Years Ended December 31, 2021 and 2022

Pre-audit/review

2022 figures are general operating only/no capital donations

2021 figures contain early capital campaign donations

Ordinary Income/Expense

	Jan - Dec 21	Budget	Jan - Dec 22	Budget
Income				
Businesses	38,022.27	19,000.00	45,711.22	29,000.00
Churches	27,341.00	22,000.00	30,909.43	30,000.00
Clubs & Organizations	2,315.00	4,000.00	4,200.00	5,000.00
Foundations	249,073.00	195,000.00	187,201.00	194,000.00
Individuals	178,094.57	90,000.00	143,346.91	95,000.00
Other, corp match, restricted			17,197.30	23,500.00
United Way	13,500.00	13,500.00	14,250.00	13,500.00
Total Income	508,345.84	343,500.00	442,815.86	390,000.00
Expense				
Director Salary	49,416.68	49,200.00	57,441.36	57,451.00
ED Payroll Taxes	3,780.44	3,780.00	4,394.23	4,395.00
Telephone ED	875.98	700	851.05	960
Client Relations	247	600	252	600
Bookkeeping Wages	4,080.00	4,200.00	4,324.80	4,320.00
Payroll Taxes	312.12	320	330.84	331
Accounting Fees	3,000.00	3,500.00	6,800.00	7,000.00
Payroll Service	814.72	720	916.38	765
Fees, Accounting & Permits - Other	829.62	200		200
Insurance	1,277.00	1,300.00	1,401.00	1,315.00
Advertising	150			
Fundraising-General	1,354.15	3,600.00	5,053.06	3,800.00
Donor Mgmt Sys	589.47	600	504.7	600
Website Services	364.44	500	400.23	300
Fundraising - Newsletter Expens - Other	1,716.81			
Wages	41,604.00	41,700.00	42,644.10	42,852.00
Payroll Taxes	3,182.64	3,280.00	3,262.24	3,278.00
Telephone, Coordinator	1,202.18	1,080.00	773.63	780.00
Vacation Staffing	500	500	500	500
Rent assistance	135,941.49	167,000.00	124,041.09	156,000.00
Utilities assistance	45,206.23	44,000.00	57,711.09	48,000.00
Auto Repair assistance	40,037.54	31,000.00	53,903.26	40,000.00
Gas Vouchers	24,583.55	11,000.00	37,575.00	39,375.00
Farmers Market Vouchers	3,492.00	4,100.00	7,975.00	3,500.00
Laundry Vouchers	1,755.29	4,900.00	2,497.85	5,500.00
Diaper Program	11,516.72	10,800.00	15,958.58	10,000.00
Food Harvest Vouchers	715	1,000.00	110	1,000.00
Gas assists			0.00	1,500.00
Pack N Play	0	1,500.00	0	1,500.00
Winter Clothing	567.78	1,000.00	1458.56	1,000.00
Christmas Campaign	6,705.68	7,200.00	6,760.05	7,500.00
Motel vouchers			5635.98	10,000.00
Mortgage Relief	6,156.03			
Client Supplies	4,146.44	2,500.00	5,893.49	6,000.00
Technology	7,150.00	5,000.00	2,405.16	2,000.00
Resource Center Rent	10,250.00	10,500.00	10,552.00	10,500.00
Admin. Rent	8,380.00	8,500.00	8,624.00	8,600.00
Miscellaneous	100		0	
Telephone, Resource Center	878.9	900	936.69	900
Office Expenses - Other	4,809.11	3,600.00	3,836.65	5,000.00
Total Expense	427,689.01	430,280.00	475,724.07	487,322.00
Net Ordinary Income	275,656.83	-86,780.00	-32,908.21	-97,322.00
Other Income				
Interest	1,255.36	1,100.00	800.00	800.00
Net Income	265,064.11	-85,680.00	-32,108.21	-96,522.00

Operation HELP 2022 Annual Service Statistics Summary

Where We Serve

Community	Households	Persons	Households (%)
Baldwin	48	150	6%
Deer Park	4	7	0%
Emerald	5	10	1%
Glenwood City	17	37	2%
Hammond	23	50	3%
Homeless	55	106	6%
Houlton	10	26	1%
Hudson	296	778	35%
New Richmond	171	436	20%
River Falls	109	244	13%
Roberts	26	73	3%
Somerset	58	165	7%
Star Prairie	2	2	0%
Wilson	2	6	0%
Woodville	15	25	2%
Other	8	11	1%
Total	849	2,126	
Average household size:	2.5 persons		

Service Delivery Units

Financial Assistance = A payout for help with rent, utilities, or car repair.

Resource Center = A visit to the Resource Center for basic need items.

These numbers do not include Christmas for Kids or Temporary Emergency Housing programs.

Community	Financial Assistance	Resource Center	Total
Baldwin	21	128	149
Deer Park	3	3	6
Emerald	3	2	5
Glenwood City	8	16	24
Hammond	11	66	77
Homeless	10	95	105
Houlton	7	22	29
Hudson	134	851	985
New Richmond	131	166	297
River Falls	45	183	228
Roberts	15	53	68
Somerset	36	85	121
Star Prairie	2		2
Wilson	1	1	2
Woodville	10	13	23
Other		9	9
Total	437	1,693	2,130

Emergency Financial Assistance Payouts by Community

Community	Car Repair	Rent	Utility	Total	Percent
Baldwin	\$ 3,142.95	\$ 6,475.00	\$ 1,501.27	\$ 11,119.22	5%
Deer Park	\$ 1,436.48			\$ 1,436.48	1%
Emerald		\$ 750.00	\$ 890.38	\$ 1,640.38	1%
Glenwood City	\$ 957.59	\$ 2,225.00	\$ 1,156.36	\$ 4,338.95	2%
Hammond	\$ 2,360.25	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,154.28	\$ 5,014.53	2%
Homeless	\$ 3,927.58	\$ 750.00		\$ 4,677.58	2%
Houlton		\$ 3,365.65	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 4,365.65	2%
Hudson	\$ 12,126.13	\$ 45,716.29	\$ 17,430.96	\$ 75,273.38	32%
New Richmond	\$ 15,190.74	\$ 30,907.14	\$ 23,668.12	\$ 69,766.00	30%
River Falls	\$ 7,366.98	\$ 14,307.00	\$ 2,615.15	\$ 24,289.13	10%
Roberts		\$ 4,045.01	\$ 3,394.91	\$ 7,439.92	3%
Somerset	\$ 6,895.42	\$ 10,350.00	\$ 3,082.29	\$ 20,327.71	9%
Star Prairie	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00		\$ 1,000.00	0%
wilson			\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	0%
Woodville	\$ 500.00	\$ 3,424.50	\$ 1,042.91	\$ 4,967.41	2%
Total	\$ 54,404.12	\$ 124,315.59	\$ 57,436.63	\$ 236,156.34	

Resource Center Item Distribution

Food and Clothing Vouchers	4,456 (Farmer's market, Food Harvest, local clothes closets)
Toiletries/hygiene items	4,206 (Soap, shampoo, shaving items, toothbrushes/paste, etc.)
Socks/Underwear	2,181 (Men's, women's, boys', girls')
Diapers/wipes	1,971 (Approximately 100 per package for a month's supply)
Toilet paper	1,686 (Rolls)
Pet Food	1,124 (Bags or pack of cans)
Laundry	946 (Laundromat vouchers and detergent)
Gas Vouchers	869 (Fuel-only gift cards at \$50 each)
Homeless bags	83 (Pre-packaged totes with basic necessities)
Referrals	69 (Connections with other agencies)
	<hr/> 18,715

Temporary Emergency Housing (motel vouchers)

Individuals served	32
Nights of lodging provided	68

Christmas Program

Families served	196
Children sponsored	508
Sponsors	175

Demographics

Monthly Income	1 person households	2 person households	3 to 5 person households	Households with 6 or more	Total
\$ 900 or less	85	46	60	21	212
\$ 901 - 1250	55	28	38	11	132
\$ 1251 - 1600	42	19	37	3	101
\$ 1601 - 1900	13	13	27	4	57
\$ 1901 - 2600	28	20	49	4	101
\$ 2601 or more	14	17	36	11	78
Total reporting	237	143	247	54	681

2023 Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) for Wisconsin: \$14,580 for a single; \$24,860 for household of 3.

Median household income for St. Croix County is \$91,320. 5.5% of households in the county are at below FPG.

Gender	Primary Client	Percent	Household Members	Percent
Female	577	68%	1,530	72%
Male	270	32%	594	28%
Non-Binary	1	0%	1	0%
Total reporting	848		2,125	

According to US Census data, 49.6% of persons living in St. Croix County are female.

Ethnicity	Primary Client	Percent	Household Members	Percent	St. Croix County*
Asian or Other Pacific Islander	4	0%	23	1%	1.2%
Prefer Not to Say	6	1%	13	1%	
Multiracial	12	1%	34	2%	1.9%
Native American or Alaska Nativ	12	1%	21	1%	0.5%
Hispanic or Latino	50	6%	161	8%	2.8%
Black or African American	63	8%	194	9%	8.0%
White	676	82%	1,625	78%	93.2%
Total reporting	823		2,071		

* US Census data

Age Range	Persons	Percent
Less than 5 years old	259	14%
5 to 12 years old	354	19%
13 to 18 years old	210	11%
19 to 24 years old	104	5%
25 to 34 year old	304	16%
35 to 44 years old	293	15%
45 to 54 years old	160	8%
55 to 64 years old	125	7%
65 or older	104	5%
Total reporting	1,913	

Households with a child under 18 46%

Households with a child 5 or younger 26%

According to US Census data, 24% of persons living in St. Croix County are under 18 years old.