

Audra O'Connell

As Executive Director of Walker's Point Youth & Family Center, Audra O'Connell empowers her team to help youth and families in crisis overcome challenges they face and when done right, prevent them from ever happening. With her holistic perspective of homelessness, and her innovation-mindedness, O'Connell is a recognized expert in systematic ways to end homelessness, with national speaking credits to her name. She has been outspoken about the need for quality, consumer based service; as well as cross-systems collaboration.

Her career has focused on ending homelessness in Milwaukee with a unique perspective given her direct-service, system creation, and now Executive Director view, helping to ensure each lens is looked at when examining the broader issue. As Coordinated Entry Program Director at IMPACT, Inc., she created and implemented a system in which to enter Milwaukee's emergency shelter which did away with decades-old "first come, first serve" mentality and based entrance on serving the most vulnerable first. She launched her career at The Guest House of Milwaukee as a housing case manager, eventually becoming a manager of that department.



O'Connell was named one of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Alumni Association's Graduates of the Last Decade, 2016; Nonprofit Center of Greater Milwaukee & Young Nonprofit Professionals of Milwaukee's Emerging Leader, 2016; and a 2017 Milwaukee Business Journal 40 under 40 recipient. She serves on numerous boards that look at addressing the needs of the homeless in our community. She is currently a member of the Milwaukee Continuum of Care, the Shelter and Transitional Housing Task Force and the Wisconsin Association of Runaway and Homeless Youth. She was formerly in the State of Wisconsin Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness; State of Wisconsin Homeless Management Information Services Advisory Board; Milwaukee Emergency Food & Shelter Program Board; and COPE Workgroup of the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division Mental Health Redesign. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee with a B.A. in Comparative Religion and an M.S. in Cultural Foundations of Community Engagement and Education.