

**March 24, 2026**

## **Blue Earth County on Importance of Sustaining Local Homeless Prevention Aid Funding**

The State of Minnesota's Local Homeless Prevention Aid (LHPA) program has proven to be a critical and effective investment in preventing homelessness and stabilizing vulnerable families in Blue Earth County. Established under Minnesota Statute 477A.30, LHPA was designed with a clear and urgent goal: to ensure that no child experiences homelessness. Locally, these funds have been strategically leveraged to deliver immediate, flexible assistance to families with children and youth facing housing instability—filling a vital gap in our local housing continuum.

Through strong partnerships with Mankato Public Schools (ISD #77), Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC), the Regional Continuum of Care, and the Homework Starts With Home (HSWH) program, LHPA funding has been used by the Blue Earth County Economic Development Authority in innovative and highly coordinated ways to identify and support students and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Schools play a key role in early identification, while program partners provide navigation, case management, and housing stabilization services. This collaborative, school-centered approach ensures that families are connected quickly to resources and supports tailored to their needs.

These partnerships do more than respond to crisis—they create a coordinated pathway through the local housing continuum that leads to lasting stability. By aligning efforts across education, housing services, and community-based organizations, families experience smoother transitions from prevention to stabilization and ultimately toward permanent housing. Collaboration reduces duplication of services, maximizes available resources, and allows providers to match families with the right intervention at the right time. As a result, families are not only able to remain housed or quickly regain housing, but they also build stronger connections to supportive services, employment resources, and community networks that promote long-term self-sufficiency.

LHPA funds are uniquely flexible, allowing for timely assistance with rental payments, security deposits, utilities, application fees, and supportive services. This flexibility enables local providers to intervene immediately—preventing homelessness before it occurs—while families wait on lists for limited permanent housing resources. For households already experiencing homelessness, LHPA provides a bridge to stability while they work toward securing long-term assistance such as Housing Choice Vouchers.

This past year, LHPA supported approximately 136 individuals, 42 households, and included 96 school-aged children. These interventions not only stabilize housing but also improve educational outcomes, family well-being, and long-term self-sufficiency. By aligning with the Homework Starts With Home initiative, LHPA ensures that housing stability is directly linked to student success, reinforcing the understanding that stable housing is foundational to educational achievement.

Importantly, LHPA operates within a broader system of federal and state-supported housing initiatives that collectively make up our housing continuum and strengthen communities.

However, these longer-term housing solutions take time to develop and access. LHPA fills the critical gap between immediate crisis and permanent housing placement. Without LHPA, many families would face prolonged instability, increased instances of homelessness, and limited access to timely assistance.

In conclusion, LHPA funding is not only effective, it is essential. It allows local partners to act quickly, leverage cross-sector collaboration, and deliver targeted, impactful support to families and youth. The demonstrated success of these partnerships shows that when systems work together, families move more efficiently toward stable housing, children experience greater educational continuity, and communities are strengthened overall. Sustaining this funding beyond its current sunset is necessary to maintain these gains, prevent homelessness, and ensure that every child in our community has a safe and stable place to call home.

-Blue Earth County



CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
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**Rep. Gomez and Rep. Davids**  
**Co-Chairs, Tax Committee**

**Re: Support for HF 4561**

Chairs Gomez and Davids and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Catholic Charities Twin Cities to express our support for HF 4561 which would repeal the sunset of the Local Homeless Prevention Aid program (LHPA). We strongly support the purpose of this program – to ensure no child is homeless – as well as the critical funding the program provides for the emergency services system.

As one of the largest emergency services and supportive housing providers in the Twin Cities, we know first-hand the importance of each dollar that is allocated to the underfunded system. Losing an entire funding stream that is instrumental to supporting families on their path to housing stability would be a significant blow to the homelessness- to- housing continuum and the families the program serves.

We appreciate that the LHPA program leverages the tax system to address real issues faced by vulnerable Minnesotans and we strongly urge this committee to support HF 4561 to allow this program to continue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jamie Verbrugge".

Jamie Verbrugge  
President and CEO  
Catholic Charities Twin Cities