

March 16, 2023

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee

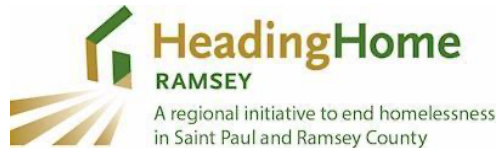
Regarding HF 1686

The elected and appointed members of Heading Home Ramsey, the HUD-mandated Continuum of Care write to offer our strong support for the Heading Home Ramsey bill, House File 1686, a request for funding to invest in and sustain effective models to provide shelter and services to those experiencing homelessness in Ramsey County. Our bill has the support of a wide range of stakeholders across the County who know this funding is key to addressing homelessness.

As Heading Home Ramsey leaders, we provide housing, emergency shelter and crisis response services across Ramsey County. Local government and community partnerships have been critical to our ability to address homelessness in our area.

In Ramsey County, the number of people experiencing homelessness is rising and has nearly doubled since 2016. Over 50 families are on the waiting list for emergency shelter and the 2023 Point-in-Time count conducted January 25 found well over 300 people sleeping outside. We need help. One-time funds enabled Heading Home Ramsey and partners to not only increase shelter capacity but also create more effective supports and interventions to move people quickly from homelessness to housing. But some funds will expire this spring and more funds are needed. While other proposed legislation will help, significant gaps remain in our ability to support five critical interventions. We respectfully request a total of \$75 million over five years:

- Continued shelter options for single adults including expanded women's shelter options. The need for women's shelter space frequently exceeds supply.
- 100-bed shelter for families and additional support for families. This model, established during the pandemic, has produced significantly improved outcomes for families, moving them into housing more quickly.
- Continued operation of day service shelters, providing support to individuals to help them stabilize, connect with resources, and move off the street.
- A low-barrier pilot program serving frequent users of emergency shelter with intensive, 24/7 staffing.
- Outreach, system improvements, and extreme weather support to help address critical immediate needs and move people onto a path to housing more quickly.



These interventions are designed to fill critical gaps while an additional \$74 million is being invested by Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul into the construction of deeply affordable housing. HF 1686 will make an immediate impact while we build more housing and importantly will help us address stark disparities among experiencing homelessness. In Ramsey County, people who are African American are 6.5 times more likely to be homeless than people who are white. People who are Native American/Indigenous are 12.5 times more likely to be homeless than their white counterparts. These unacceptable disparities must be addressed.

We know you share our concern for these families and individuals experiencing homelessness. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jaime Tincher'.

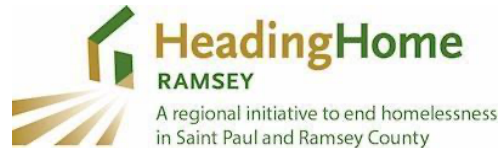
Jaime Tincher  
Deputy Mayor, City of St. Paul  
Chair, Heading Home Ramsey

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Trista MatasCastillo'.

Trista MatasCastillo  
Chair, Ramsey County Board of Commissioners  
Vice Chair, Heading Home Ramsey

**Heading Home Ramsey Governing Board**

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- Tiffany Scott Knox, St. Paul Promise Neighborhood
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