



February 7, 2022

Chair Alice Hausman
453 State Office building
St Paul, Minnesota 55155
Via email

Re: Emergency Rental Assistance for Minnesotans

Dear Chair Hausman and Housing finance & Policy Committee members:

We write to you as organizations concerned for Minnesotans' housing stability and security, including renter advocates, legal services providers, housing providers, and service providers. We are committed to eliminating rental indebtedness caused by the pandemic, preventing eviction, and creating support for long term policy changes that end housing instability and homelessness.

As you know all too well, Minnesotans continue to suffer from the ongoing pandemic in both direct and indirect ways. Community transmission rates remain high and deaths from COVID-19 complications continue at extremely concerning levels. Education disruption and stress for K-12 students as schools continue to flex between on-line and in-person learning is a state-wide emergency and economic turmoil continues especially for those in low-paid positions. A critical refuge has been home, with tens of thousands of Minnesotans relying on emergency rental assistance to pay their rent bills and remain in their homes.

RentHelpMN closed on January 28, 2022, with only three days' notice. In that short window, thousands upon thousands of Minnesotans sought to complete their applications on time, with the fear of displacement, eviction, and even homelessness driving this urgency. Creating additional concern, the closure of RentHelpMN means that thousands of renters will lose the protections of the pandemic-related eviction off-ramp, which prohibits eviction for non-payment of rent until June 2022 if a household has a pending application for emergency rental assistance.

To keep Minnesotans safely housed through June 2022 of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we ask that RentHelpMN be reopened and additional pandemic-relief of \$300 million be appropriated for emergency rental assistance. To align with the bipartisan eviction off-ramp legislation, program funding must be authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) or Consolidated Appropriations Act.

We hope to continue working closely with you to prevent evictions and ensure that our most vulnerable, low-income households have access to stable housing while we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and economic impacts.



Sincerely,

Nelima Sitate Munene, Executive Director
African Career Education & Resource Inc.

Owen Duckworth, Director of Organizing and Policy
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

Wendy Underwood, Vice President of Social Justice Advocacy & Engagement
Catholic Charities of St Paul and Minneapolis

Marco Hernandez, Public Policy Director
COPAL MN

Deidre Schmidt, President & CEO
CommonBond Communities

Eric Hauge, Executive Director
HOME Line

Margaret Kaplan, President
Housing Justice Center

Ellen Sahli, Executive Director
Family Housing Fund

Elena Gaarder, CEO
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers

Bill Grant, Executive Director
MinnCAP

Rhonda Otteson, Executive Director
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless

Anne Mavity, Executive Director
Minnesota Housing Partnership

Shannon Guernsey, Executive Director
Minnesota NAHRO



Asad Aliweyd, Founder/Executive Director and Sedia Omar, Community Engagement
New American Development Center (NADC)

cc: House Housing Finance & Policy Committee Members