



# Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

*St. Paul Province*

March 1, 2023

To: Human Services Finance Committee Chair: Representative Mohamud Noor  
Health and Human Services Committee Chair: Senator Melissa Wiklund

***Re: Support of the Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care Bills including funding for Project Home***

Dear Senator Wiklund and Representative Noor:

We, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJ), St. Paul Province, write today in **support** of the **Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care Bills – SF 2033/HF 1686** – and request funding for families experiencing homelessness including the continuation of the Project Home family shelter in our Provincial House.

We are concerned that Ramsey County continues seeing increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness with numbers that have nearly doubled since 2016. More than 45 families are currently on the county waiting list for emergency shelter. The 2023 Point-in-Time count conducted on January 25 found well over 300 people were sleeping outside. In the face of these needs and challenges, in 2021, in partnership with Interfaith Action and the Project Home ministry, the CSJ community welcomed homeless children and their parents into our Provincial House. Fifty-four percent of our guests are under the age of 13. Because of the excellent services provided, 91 percent of the families remain in positive housing six months after moving out of Project Home.

One-time funds enabled Heading Home Ramsey and partners to increase shelter capacity and create more effective supports and interventions to move people quickly from homelessness to housing. Now, we as the State of Minnesota have the opportunity to support continued funding at this critical time of urgent need.

Heading Home Ramsey's request for \$75 million will fund five critical interventions:

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

We know you share our concern for families and individuals experiencing homelessness. Caring for those on the margins is the role of not only religious institutions. The moral measure of a society is how it responds to those most in need, and as such, government support is essential. We can find no one more in need than children without a place to call home. We ask for your sincere consideration of the Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care Bills request and support for families-our dear neighbors experiencing homelessness and those in need now and into the future.

The CSJ's mission calls us to pursue Moving always toward the profound love of God and love of neighbor without distinction. From the beginning, our Sisters have always moved toward easing the burdens of those in need. In this spirit, in our beloved Twin Cities, we founded a variety of ministries to address urgent needs and to improve the lives of our neighbors. These ministries include: addressing health care needs through St. Joseph's Hospital; assisting asylees through Sarah's...an Oasis for Women; supporting immigrants through Learning in Style and St. Mary's Health Clinics; building strong communities through Peace House and Hope Communities; and seeking justice for families experiencing homelessness through our partnership with Project Home.

Sincerely,

*Catherine M. Auergraw, CSJ*

*Jeff Wadsworth, CSJ*

*Katherine Rossini, CSJ*

Province Leadership Team