



April 11th, 2024

Re: HF5200 Simplify State-Funded Supportive Housing Resources

Dear Chair Noor and Members of the Human Services Finance Committee,

Beacon is a collaborative of 100 congregations that creates new, deeply affordable homes with services, sustains 20 affordable buildings for over 1200 residents, and advocates for change to our state and local housing policy.

Beacon supports HF5200 because the current landscape of funding for supportive housing is uncoordinated and inadequate to meet the needs. This bill aims to streamline access, eligibility, and administration of multiple state-funded supportive housing resources for individuals experiencing homelessness in Minnesota.

Supportive housing is the key strategy to ending homelessness in our region, and the model is at the point of breaking. The rapid increase in the amount and acuity of need because of things like the opioid crisis, along with skyrocketing expenses like security, are just some of the challenges. We need supportive housing more than ever, yet without more and better-coordinated resources, Minnesota may lose supportive housing units.

As an owner-operator, it is essential to streamline eligibility criteria, paperwork, and funding distribution. This workgroup task of proposing solutions to align the funding between Minnesota Housing and the Department of Human Services is critically needed. Minnesota Housing's capital awards come with a 15-year commitment for owners to provide supportive housing, while the DHS program operates at different times and on different scales. This creates administrative complexity for agencies and residents, which no one can afford right now.

Addressing these issues has the potential to make Minnesota the best state for supportive housing. The proposed workgroup, comprised of representatives from various agencies and organizations across the state, including people with lived experience, will play a pivotal role in shaping effective policies and guiding us toward practical long-term solutions to homelessness.

Sincerely,

Thank You,

Ben Helvick Anderson
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