

April 2, 2024

I am sending this note of support for Washington County's Emergency Housing Services Building (EHSB) Project in Stillwater on behalf of Valley Outreach. **Securing funding for this project will create capacity in a system that has been severely underserved for decades.**

As a long-time partner with Washington County in homelessness prevention work and serving unhoused people through our programs, we know this new facility will **address an urgent need** for community members. It is critical people have a safe, dignified place to stay temporarily while they find stable housing, work, and other resources to help move their lives forward.

We recently became a subgrantee for the County for the Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) because finding stable housing is a top need for people participating in our Client Support Services program. In the last fiscal year, before receiving FHPAP grant dollars, we helped 216 households with rent, deposits, and utilities. **It only takes one bad day – an unexpected medical event, a job loss, a broken car – to push many families and individuals out of their homes.**

We believe that this work is more important than ever as the number of people experiencing homelessness in Washington County has increased steadily and significantly over the past three years according to state Homeless Management Information System data. The EHSB, while a temporary stop for people experiencing homelessness, can also be the **first stop to a life of greater stability and security.**

Let's make it better. Together.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Maki".

Tracy Maki  
Chief Executive Officer

