



**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

1931 West Broadway, Suite 101

Minneapolis, MN 55411

[www.rseden.org](http://www.rseden.org)

March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025

House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee

**Re: HF 1831: Simplify Background Study Requirement in Housing Support Program for Supportive Housing and Emergency Shelter**

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

I am writing on behalf of RS EDEN to express our support for HF 1831, which aims to simplify the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) background study requirement for staff, volunteers, and board members working in emergency shelter and supportive housing settings funded by the state Housing Support program. This proposed change is essential for effective service delivery and maintaining the safety and well-being of those we serve.

For 52 years, RS EDEN has provided substance use disorder treatment, support for people reentering the community after incarceration, permanent, supportive, and deeply affordable housing, and mental health services in the Twin Cities metro. RS EDEN owns, operates, and provides permanent supportive housing to 627 units across the metro. These units include single adults, youth, and family housing. RS EDEN serves 100% people living in poverty and majority people of color. RS EDEN serves those members of our community who otherwise would not have access to resources; RS EDEN is truly a safety net provider.

Under current law, individuals serving in supportive housing and emergency shelter programs funded by the state Housing Support program are required to undergo the DHS Background Study. However, this process has proven to be burdensome, redundant, and costly. It also duplicates other background checks, including those mandated by the Kari Koskinen Background Check Act, which specifically applies to employees with access to tenants' homes.

As employers, we are forced to allocate additional resources for supervising applicants during the lengthy study process, which can extend for weeks or even months. The financial strain is prohibitive for us to consider applicants with lived experiences of homelessness—individuals who bring valuable skills and unique perspectives to their roles but are disproportionately affected by the justice system.

Simplifying this DHS-specific requirement will bring much needed financial and operational relief to our work and workers, as well as align with requirements for all other state and federal funding for emergency shelter and supportive housing.

We urge your support for HF 1831 to create a more effective and compassionate system to address homelessness in Minnesota.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carline Hood'.

Carline Hood, LICSW (*she/her/hers*)

President and CEO - RS EDEN

[chood@rseden.org](mailto:chood@rseden.org); 612.578.5044



March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**RE: HF1831 Background Checks modified for housing support providers**

Dear Chair Schomacker and members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee,

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative appreciates the opportunity to support Rep. Zeleznikar's bill, HF1831, which would reform the background checks for housing support providers. We and the entire Supportive Housing Coalition support this bill because Housing Support is an essential state program for permanent supportive housing.

Permanent supportive housing (also just called "supportive housing") provides safe, affordable and stable housing with on-site services. Housing is available to families, individuals, and unaccompanied youth and young adults who are at risk of or are already experiencing homelessness. The goal is for residents to gain stability, maintain their housing and achieve their personal goals.

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative is a non-profit housing provider and developer with 24 buildings that provide affordable homes for over 1,200 people. We primarily operate supportive housing, which provides safe, affordable, and stable housing with on-site services for the most vulnerable Minnesotans who have experienced homelessness.

Beacon supports this bill to modify background checks because current law mandates that Housing Support programs undergo the DHS Background Study process for board members, staff, and volunteers with direct contact with the recipient. The process is costly, time-consuming, and duplicative of other background studies conducted by organizations, including the Kari Koskinen Background Check Act, which mandates checks for staff accessing a tenant's home as part of their duties.

Staffing is a significant challenge for service providers in supportive housing. Duplicative background checks cause delays or the inability to hire staff. Often qualified candidates with lived experience of homelessness are blocked from receiving a job they are well suited for. This duplicative process harms the care residents receive

Please join us in supporting this bill.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benjamin Helvick Anderson".

Benjamin Helvick Anderson  
VP of Policy and Organizing  
Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative



2309 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404  
**612-874-0311** main | **612-874-0313** fax



March 12, 2025

House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee

Re: HF 1831: Simplify Background Study Requirement in Housing Support Program for Supportive Housing and Emergency Shelter

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

I am writing on behalf of Agate Housing and Services to express our support for HF 1831, which aims to simplify the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) background study requirement for staff, volunteers, and board members working in emergency shelter and supportive housing settings funded by the state Housing Support program. This proposed change is essential for effective service delivery and maintaining the safety and well-being of those we serve.

Agate Housing and Services provides emergencies services like outreach, shelter, hunger relief and permanent supportive housing. The background check requirement has been an obstacle to hiring and we believe it is more likely to negatively affect the employees from BIPOC communities we are recruiting. It also slows the hiring process.

Under current law, individuals serving in supportive housing and emergency shelter programs funded by the state Housing Support program are required to undergo the DHS Background Study. However, this process has proven to be burdensome, redundant, and costly. It also duplicates other background checks, including those mandated by the Kari Koskinen Background Check Act, which specifically applies to employees with access to tenants' homes.

As employers, we are forced to allocate additional resources for supervising applicants during the lengthy study process, which can extend for weeks or even months. The financial strain is prohibitive for us to consider applicants with lived experiences of homelessness—individuals who bring valuable skills and unique perspectives to their roles but are disproportionately affected by the justice system.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kyle Hanson'.

Kyle Hanson Executive  
Director  
Agate Housing and Services