



March 14, 2023

Representative Mike Howard  
House Finance and Policy Chair

Dear Representative Howard and committee members,

I am writing to you in support of **Strengthen Supportive Housing**. Center City Housing provides over 700 units of supportive housing in greater Minnesota. This includes Duluth, St. Cloud, Rochester, Bemidji and Inver Grove Heights. We have been developing and providing this type of housing to single adults, families with children, couples and unaccompanied youth since 2007. We are considered a leader in attaining long term housing success with households who had very little housing stability prior to living with us. The supportive housing model makes this possible.


Homelessness continues to grow in Minnesota. A very large number of our state's homeless are children who are significantly affected and impacted by just one episode of homelessness. In most of our supportive housing projects, people have had multiple episodes of homelessness (this includes the children) and they were often homeless as children. It is critical that we create solutions that interrupt this generational homelessness and reduce the number of people living on our streets.

Our experience has proven that supportive housing works on multiple levels. Not only does it end each household homelessness immediately and provide long term housing stability, it saves expensive governmental systems a lot of money. This includes detox, police and jails, emergency rooms and reduced out of home placement costs for children. Supportive housing projects rarely have households go back to the streets.

Most of our supportive housing project have a front desk that is truly the HUB of the facility. We provide support 24 hours a day. People can have a crisis any time, not just during business hours and the desk staff are trained to respond and support tenants. Often people become homeless because of their guests and families moving in and/or causing disruptions. The front desk neutralizes this issue and supports tenants in helping family and friends with something other than over housing two/three families in one unit and then losing their housing.

As a low income/homeless housing developer we have partnered with Minnesota Housing to develop or rehab over 20 projects in the last sixteen years. It is often a struggle to find funds to support the front desk and tenant services coordination. Also, those funds are often short term and we need to continually fundraise to maintain an adequate level of support to households. The support in supportive housing is critical to the overall success of each household in attaining long term housing stability. This bill could create structural change to integrate the needed capital, operating and services funding in a way that will create long term sustainability for supportive housing projects. In addition to improving service delivery for new projects, this bill has the opportunity to "right size" projects that were previously funded and can demonstrate a streamlined way to align funding coming through MN Housing's super RFP.

Sincerely,

  
Nancy Cashman  
Executive Director

105 ½ WEST FIRST STREET  
DULUTH, MN 55802  
PHONE (218) 722-7161 : FAX (218) 720-3483