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MARCH 17, 2022

Dear Housing Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing to express support of the Governor's Supplemental Budget line item for HMIS, which includes \$5.6M over the next four years. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a data system mandated for many homeless service programs by the Department of Human Services and Minnesota Housing, but that mandate is without secured funding.

HMIS is an active and vibrant database used by hundreds of nonprofit agencies and 1300+ users to capture trends and outcomes for nearly 24,000 homeless beds statewide. This year, it helped secure over \$37M in federal funding for Minnesota.

As the state system administrator, we provide ongoing training (700 new users in 2021), support (answering 9,000 inquiries in 2021), reporting (maintaining over 100 custom reports), and data literacy coaching to users. We also complete initiatives for funders to respond to community needs across the state including dashboarding like [the MN Dash to End Homelessness](#).

HMIS provides important insights into the collective impact of our statewide efforts to prevent and end homelessness, and to measure effectiveness of homeless programs funded at the state and local level. It also facilitates placements into emergency shelters and permanent housing.

Our work also provides an accountability mechanism by ensuring data entered in the system is complete, accurate, and timely. The Quarterly Data Quality monitoring initiative (QDQ) is a collaboration of data entry providers, regional coordinators, state funding partners, and ICA Minnesota to review and score data in the system according to accepted standards for error rates. 1,400 unique data entry providers have participated in this initiative since its launch in 2020.

By the QDQ metrics, statewide data achieves consistently a 90% or greater rating for completeness and accuracy. This helps us know whether the data is sound for monitoring how funds are spent.

We can use HMIS to answer questions like these:

- **What were the characteristics of persons served in Covid-19 response shelters, and were they different from the characteristics of persons served in traditional shelter?** They were different. For example, Covid-19 response shelters served proportionally more families and more Native American persons than traditional shelters between April 2020 and September 2021.
- **What are the characteristics of persons served in emergency shelter who go on to transitional housing or rapid rehousing, and are they different from those who are only served in shelter and street outreach?** They are

different. There are, proportionally, more people who go on to transitional housing and rapid re-housing who are families, who are survivors of domestic violence, and who are veterans.

- **Are there disparities in outcomes for people experiencing homelessness based on their race and ethnicity?** Yes. We know that people of color are overrepresented in the population of people experiencing homelessness across the state.

Though HMIS is central to how we fight homelessness in Minnesota, there isn't any dedicated funding for HMIS itself. The Governor's Budget aims to change this. I hope this letter of support informs your decision-making and highlights the value of this essential data system.

Warm regards,

Britt Heinz-Amborn, MPP

MINNESOTA HMIS DIRECTOR