



January 19, 2023
Chair Noor
Members of the Human Services Finance Committee

Dear Chair Noor and members of the Human Services Finance Committee:

United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) is reaching out to this committee in appreciation of your consideration of HF444. UCAP has been serving people experiencing homelessness for decades, and funding included will have a tremendous impact on our state, region, and the people we serve. We know that shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness. We are grateful that homelessness is being prioritized in this way and would like to share the impact it will have in the thirteen-county region we serve: Cottonwood, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, and Rock Counties.

\$150 million for Emergency Shelter Facilities

We are so thankful to see this included. Nearly \$200 million in capital needs exist statewide, and those projects would create or preserve over 3,400 shelter spaces. Every region in the state needs access to additional shelter spaces, and our region is no different. In fact, we plan to seek support for a project to create new shelter beds in southwest Minnesota, which cannot happen without emergency shelter capital.

\$40 million in 2024/25 and \$70 million in 2026/27 for the Emergency Services Program (ESP)

This funding will allow organizations like UCAP to meet the needs of more people experiencing homelessness through supporting shelters, outreach, motel vouchers, and other key resources and services. While UCAP was able to serve over 400 households with Emergency Shelter in 2022, we had no choice but turn many others away. Increased ESP funding means fewer people are left without shelter.

\$9 million for the Transitional Housing Program (THP)

Along with responding to our unsheltered homelessness crisis, HF444 includes funding for THP which is vital for many individuals and families leaving shelter. THP helps individuals and families obtain stable housing where they can develop good rental history while finding a permanent housing destination.

In addition to the above priorities, UCAP is grateful to see these remaining items included in HF444:

- Homeless Management Information System
- Homeless Youth Act
- Homeless youth; chosen family grants

We applaud the leadership for bringing this bill forward. Shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness.

Sincerely,

Debi Brandt

Debi Brandt, Executive Director
United Community Action Partnership