



\$10 million appropriation to expand retrofitting residential high-rise buildings with lifesaving fire sprinklers.

This second phase for a competitive application process grant program will again be administered through the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA).

HIGH RISE RESIDENTIAL FIRE SPRINKLER PROGRAM

House File 1334 (Noor)/ Senate File 1895 (Mohamed)

BACKGROUND

Following the tragic fire at the Cedar-Riverside high rise in 2019 (which resulted in five deaths), the Minnesota State Legislature began the critical effort to protect citizens living in residential high-rise housing with a mandate in 2021 to install sprinkler retrofits in residential high-rise public housing. Next, in 2023, the Legislature implemented an incentive and \$10 million grant program for non-profit and for-profit residential high-rise housing to retrofit their buildings with fire sprinklers. Lessons learned from this first round of grants is that the criteria was too restrictive and limited applicants, making it difficult for building owners to qualify for grant assistance.

HF 1334 / SF 1895 would appropriate an additional \$10 million and expand eligibility criteria.

ADDITIONAL 2025 ELIGIBILITY

1) Expanded grant to include "loans" to ensure that potentially eligible tax credit properties abide by IRS rules pertaining to grants. In these cases, MHFA would structure the assistance as a zero percent deferred forgivable loan.

2) Better defines a high rise building by adding "at seven stories or more" to the existing 75 feet or above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access.

3) Ensures all affordable housing - as defined by the federal government - is eligible for grants.

EXISTING ELIGIBILITY

- Provide permanent residential housing.
- Have at least two-thirds of its units affordable to households with an annual income at or below 50% of area median income.
- Accept rental subsidies (such as Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, as amended).
- Meet the requirement for matching funds:
 - Each grant to a for-profit organization requires a 50 percent match.
 - Each grant to non-profit organizations, local units of governments, or federally recognized Indian Tribes shall require a 25 percent match.
- Priority for grants given to nonprofit entities.

Publicly owned housing programs are eligible if they meet all the eligibility requirements.

Fire Sprinklers Buy Time. Time Buys Life.

How fire sprinklers save lives:

Rapid fire containment: Sprinklers activate immediately when they detect heat (not smoke), allowing them to control a fire before it spreads to other floors or areas.

Evacuation time: By quickly suppressing a fire, sprinklers provide occupants with valuable time to safely exit the building.

Reduced damage: Early fire suppression limits the extent of fire damage to the building and its contents.

Accessibility challenges: In high-rise buildings, reaching a fire with traditional firefighting methods can be difficult, making sprinklers even more critical.

Life safety concerns: Due to the potential for rapid fire spread in tall buildings, fire sprinklers are considered a vital life safety measure.



National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA)

Minnesota Chapter

Tom Brace brace@nfsa.org 651-644-7800

Sherry Munyon smunyon@capitolaccess.us 612-723-4245

3/4/2025