



Association of Minnesota Counties

March 16, 2021

Re: County Support HF 1791

Chair Marquart and Members of the House Tax Committee:

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties, an association representing all of Minnesota's 87 counties, we write in general support for HF 1791 as well as to provide feedback for future funding formula discussions.

As county commissioners have testified in multiple committees this session, homelessness does not occur in a vacuum around the metro. **Homelessness is a statewide issue that requires a statewide solution.**

Counties enter discussions surrounding youth homelessness with humility—wanting to help, but also wanting to make sure that we can meet the expectations in this legislation and serve youth and families experiencing homelessness in the best way possible. Counties share the following principles on any homelessness prevention aid that moves forward this session and hope you consider them in your plans for alleviating youth homelessness:

- **Collaboration-based approach.** AMC appreciates bill language that allows multi-entity collaboration with other local governments, regional partnerships, and community-based nonprofits. Critical to fulfilling the goals of the legislation will be for counties to assess quickly, and honestly who is in the best position to provide assistance, outreach, and support in their communities.
- **Program flexibility.** Addressing youth and family homelessness will require creative and multilayered approaches. Similar to how the Legislature responded to providing business relief funding, we ask that any legislation provide flexibility for local governments and community partners to respond in unique ways that best meet the needs of youth and family. Homelessness appears differently throughout the state and will require communities to respond in ways that are reflective of their residents, needs, and capacities. Overly prescriptive language will damper efforts to be efficient, responsive, and innovative.
- **Funding dependability.** Counties are requesting more information on how Minnesota Department of Education Point in Time (PIT) counts work and how this data might fluctuate within a year or multiple years. As counties work to develop programming strategies and community partnerships, they will need to be able to rely on dependable funding streams to provide long-term solutions and outcomes. While we agree that funding should be based on experiences of youth homelessness, we also request that future bill language address year-to-year volatility through a mechanism similar to multiyear averages and/or mandatory floors or caps on year-to-year losses. We look forward to working with the author, committee members, and staff to explore creative ways to achieve these goals and provide additional reliability.

In closing, AMC thanks the author and committee for their time to provide feedback. The increasing numbers of youth homelessness is a grave concern but one that can be addressed through action. Counties stand ready to work with the state to implement local solutions that achieve the laudable goals encompassed in HF1791

Sincerely,



Matt Hilgart
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Association of Minnesota Counties