

April 7, 2022
Chair Jennifer Schultz
Members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee

Dear Chair Schultz and members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee:

The Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless (MCH) is writing to express support for House File 4579 as amended by the A22 amendment. The proposals outlined in this bill are desperately needed investments to respond to the homelessness crisis here in Minnesota.

The 2022 Policy Agenda of the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless has focused on the experience that an individual or family may have transitioning from homelessness to a permanent home. We know that shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness. Along the way, several key programs need additional resources to move families and individuals into safe, affordable, and accessible homes.

To this end, the following provisions in the omnibus bill within Article 11 will move us in the right direction:

- We strongly support Section 9 which creates the criteria for the \$75 million in shelter capital funds available to build, acquire, and/or rehabilitate shelter spaces.
- We would like to express support for sections 2 and 3, which extend the use of the Transitional Housing Program and clarifies existing language for possible extensions in this program.
- We have previously written to this committee in support of the provisions found in section 4 which would clarify what counts as income in the housing supports program. This would reduce barriers to exiting homelessness and allow people to keep more of their income.
- We also support section 6 which extends the timeline of the Task Force on Shelter, allowing more time to develop these important recommendations which will improve/inform our shelter response system across Minnesota.

Within the appropriations for this bill, we would like to express support for the following programs that are receiving funds:

- \$75 million for Shelter Capital Funding to build, acquire, and/or rehabilitate shelter spaces.
- \$85 million for the Emergency Services Program to fund shelter operations and workforce.
- \$5 million for the Transitional Housing Program to increase program effectiveness in moving individuals and families into a permanent home.
- \$30 million for the Homeless Youth Act to support youth experiencing homelessness in their transition to a permanent home.
- \$16.5 million for Safe Harbor to provide safe pathways for youth experiencing sexual exploitation.
- \$1.65 million for Shelter Linked Youth Mental Health Grants to provide mental health treatment in shelters.

These investments will help move Minnesota closer to eliminating homelessness. This is the time to realize our potential and make great strides toward ensuring everyone has a safe, stable, affordable and accessible place to call home. We look forward to supporting House File 4579 as it moves forward this session.

Sincerely,



Rhonda Otteson
Executive Director