

Unsheltered in Minnesota

Investments in ESP are critical to support those most in need



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MINNESOTA: OUT IN THE COLD

Minnesota's statewide housing crisis is impacting Minnesotans at every point in the housing continuum, but no group is in more danger than the unsheltered – the dramatically increasing number of people living in their cars, under bridges, in stairwells and other places not meant for human habitation. This population is growing quickly, and it is time for Minnesotans to act:

- On any given night, **nearly 8,000 people experience homelessness across Minnesota**; about 25 percent are unsheltered, nearly one-third are children, and more than 60 percent are people of color.
- Unsheltered communities in the Twin Cities have experienced **a dramatic 50% increase** between 2019 and 2020.
- In Greater Minnesota, the number of unsheltered **increased by nearly one-third (32%)** between 2019 and 2020.
- Since Higher Ground Saint Paul opened in 2017, the number of guests served each night **increased from 280 to 356** without a base increase in public funding to help keep pace with increased services.
- In 2019, Catholic Charities Hope Street for homeless youth, the region's largest youth shelter, was forced to **turn away almost 1,000 young people**.

ESP: A PUBLIC ANSWER TO A PUBLIC CRISIS

Minnesota's homelessness crisis has strained the shelter system and forced providers to rely on private funding and their own reserves at an unsustainable rate. Catholic Charities Opportunity Centers in both Minneapolis and Saint Paul, for example, are **supported almost entirely by private sources** (97% and 92%, respectively).

Public funding has been largely stagnant for years. This along with declines in significant sources of private support have put at risk the stability of the state's shelter system, and the situation has been made worse by the financial pressures brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Without increased public financial support, shelter programs are limited in the support they can provide to help put Minnesotans on a path to housing stability. This creates additional pressures on first responders and emergency healthcare services, as individuals in need find themselves with nowhere else to turn for help.

The Emergency Services Program (ESP) is currently the state's only investment to help Minnesota's shelter providers respond to the unsheltered crisis. Significant and stable state investments are needed to support the ongoing operations of emergency shelters and respond to the immediate needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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DIGNIFIED SHELTER, PERMANENT HOMES AND PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY.



EMERGENCY SHELTERS SAVE LIVES

Shelters provide dignified space and life-saving services to individuals and families across the state. The flexibility of the Emergency Services Program (ESP) is critical to meeting their needs and can be used to pay for food, bedding, laundry, transportation, housing and employment counselors, mental health staff, cleaning, hotel vouchers and more.

The use of ESP as COVID-19 emergency aid to shelter providers during the pandemic demonstrates the success of this funding model. Because of its flexibility, shelter providers have been able to use ESP to modify their operations to meet physical distancing and safety protocols that have effectively minimized the spread of the virus among individuals who are at significant risk for infection and medical complications.

Emergency shelters save lives. Increased and stable state funding for ESP is needed to ensure shelter providers can continue to respond to the current and ongoing needs caused by our state’s homelessness crisis.

WHAT MUST BE DONE:

1. Increase public funding for Minnesota’s shelter system by investing \$15 million a biennium in ongoing ESP funding to meet needs statewide.
2. Provide emergency aid to support immediate needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic response.
3. Pursue aggressive permanent housing strategies developed by state, county and municipal leaders in partnership with service providers, including strengthening investments in Housing Support.

Catholic Charities Emergency Shelter and Services Service Volume and Funding Summary FY2020

Program	People served	Total nights	Total cost (\$ million)	Private %*	Public % **	Gap (\$ million)
Higher Ground Saint Paul Shelter	2,065	109,798	2.7 m	79%	21%	(2.1 m)
Saint Paul Opportunity Center	5,497	Year-round services	3.0 m	92%	8%	(2.7 m)
Higher Ground Minneapolis Shelter	2,197	84,424	1.8 m	53%	47%	(1.0 m)
Hope Street Shelter	194	9,012	1.4 m	69%	31%	(0.9 m)
Ramsey County Family Shelter	404	20,878	1.1 m	35%	65%	(0.4 m)
Minneapolis Opportunity Center	4,432	Year-round services	1.0 m	97%	3%	(1.0 m)
Total	14,789	224,112	10.9 m	74%	26%	(8.2 m)

* Combination of private contributions, philanthropic grants and client payments

** Includes federal, state and local dollars