

Housing Support



CATHOLIC CHARITIES

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cctwincities.org



Higher Ground Minneapolis Residence

Housing Support Promotes Housing Stability and Prevents Homelessness

Housing Support is a statewide program that exists to help people achieve and maintain housing stability. Directed towards seniors and adults with disabilities who have low incomes and who are at risk of homelessness or institutional placement, the program helps pay for housing costs, including rent, utilities, food, bed and linens, laundry and household supplies. More than half of recipients are people of color or American Indian.

Catholic Charities' Housing Stability Program at a glance

- 30% of residents are aged 55+
- 65% of residents report having a disability
- 32% of residents report having no income at entry

In 2019, Housing Support moved more than 3,900 individuals out of homelessness and into stable housing.

While individuals are eligible to live in a wide range of settings, more and more (21% of all Housing Support recipients

and growing) are choosing to live in community settings with a lease. This includes private apartment buildings, providing quality housing with independent landlords receiving guaranteed rent.

The COVID-19 pandemic and response has raised awareness of the benefits and opportunities provided by Housing Support, and there are a growing number of landlords and service providers interested in pursuing the program, particularly in Greater Minnesota.

Current Challenges

The maximum base rate for Housing Support (currently \$934) has not kept pace with the average cost of rent and the additional supports (like food, laundry, linens, etc.) required of the program. This makes it harder for housing providers to administer the program and creates a disincentive for new landlords to participate in the program at a time when we are already facing an affordable housing shortage.

When landlords can't afford to be Housing Support providers, it negatively impacts those who are currently enrolled in or would otherwise qualify for the program. **Catholic Charities staff spend nearly as much time rehousing existing clients due to an inability to meet rising housing costs as they spend assisting eligible Housing Support recipients who are still experiencing homelessness and waiting for a housing placement.**

(over)

DIGNIFIED SHELTER, PERMANENT HOMES AND PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY.



Current law also limits the number of days a Housing Support recipient can be absent from their residence to no more than 18 days at a time. This poses a challenge to residents requiring hospitalization for a chronic medical condition or illness like COVID-19, as well as those with a history of substance use or mental illness who may benefit from and wish to enroll in longer-term treatment programs. By seeking recommended treatment, they face the difficult position of losing their housing, which threatens to throw them back into homelessness.

Individuals should not have to choose between housing or healthcare. Housing is healthcare.

Many adults experiencing homelessness have a chronic physical health condition, mental illness or substance use disorder that makes it more difficult to find and keep stable housing.

Among Catholic Charities clients who self reported a need to see a medical professional:

- **36%** indicated it was for physical health problems
- **27%** indicated it was for emotional or mental health problems
- **8%** indicated it was for alcohol or drug problems

Source: 2018 Wilder Homeless Study.



The Solution

We can strengthen Housing Support and promote greater stability for residents and landlords by:

- Increasing base rate funding by \$100 a month to help landlords and service providers maintain and add critical Housing Support units across Minnesota.
- Waiving temporary absence requirements to ensure residents aren't penalized for seeking needed healthcare, including substance use or mental health treatment.

These policy solutions build on evidence-based approaches to address the state's housing crisis and would support housing stability and health for thousands of Minnesotans across the state.



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