



March 25, 2024

Chair Pinto and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN. 55155

RE: HF 4950

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Children & Families Finance and Policy Committee,

Thank you for your support for youth, adults and families experiencing homelessness, with historic investments last session and ongoing opportunities this session!

We are writing in support of HF 4950 to provide funding for a study on pregnant and parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness across our state.

Hearth Connection is a nonprofit organization collaborating with government, service providers, and community partners statewide through convening, capacity-building, and advocating for policy and systems change. We contract with more than 30 providers across Minnesota, including many working with youth and young families to provide rental assistance and support services to advance long-term solutions to homelessness.

Minnesota's children and youth should never have to experience homelessness. As a state we know that we are lacking the resources and supports that these young families need and deserve. We also know that their needs are unique and deserving of an intentional lens to understand their scope and solutions. This study will help us do exactly that.

We urge you to support HF 4950 to help us determine the statewide numbers of youth who are pregnant and/or parenting while experiencing homelessness. This bill will help us determine how best to provide support for youth-headed families in emergency shelter and housing as we work to support them with long-term solutions to homelessness and housing instability.

Thank you for your public service and for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Marcus Schmit
Executive Director



March 22, 2024

Chair Pinto and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Children & Families Finance and Policy Committee,

First and foremost, thank you for your strong support for youth, adults and families experiencing homelessness and for supporting historic and critical investments last session. And we know that the work is not done.

I am writing this letter in support of HF 4950 which would provide funding for a study on pregnant and parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness across our state.

At Avenues for Youth, we partner with youth experiencing homelessness to achieve their dreams. We recently doubled the size of our Young Families program so that we now able to work with twenty-four youth headed households at a time. We anticipate supporting at least 36 youth-headed households annually. We see firsthand the real struggles that our young families are going through and want to find ways to strengthen our state's support for these Incredible young people and children. We know that the need for support for young families is much bigger than we can currently meet.

Minnesota's children and youth should never have to experience homelessness. Raising children while experiencing homelessness is incredibly challenging. We regularly work with young parents who are trying the best they can to raise their babies and young children while living in cars, staying in emergency shelters, fleeing domestic violence and other horrific situations. We know our state lacks sufficient supports that these young families need and deserve. However, we also know that there are significant gaps in our knowledge about young families experiencing homelessness.

This study would help us to determine the statewide numbers of youth who are pregnant and/or parenting while experiencing homelessness across our state. It would also help us to determine how best to provide support for the youth headed families (which are unique and different from adult headed families) along with the gaps in services, emergency shelter and housing that we have for this population. The study would include youth with lived experience of homelessness. We ask that you support HF 4950. This bill is an important step in our work to better support pregnant and parenting youth and towards our larger goal of reducing and ending homelessness in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katherine Meerse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Katherine Meerse
Executive Director

March 25, 2024

Chair Pinto and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN. 55155

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Children & Families Finance and Policy Committee,

The MN Coalition for the Homeless is writing this letter in support of HF 4950 which would provide funding for a study on pregnant and parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness across our state. This study would help the legislature and advocates in determining the statewide numbers of youth who are pregnant and/or parenting while experiencing homelessness across our state. This information will help ensure we are using State resources in the most effective way to provide support for the youth headed families (which is unique and different from adult headed families). Youth and generational homelessness is something MN must do everything possible to end. This study will not only help identify current needs but will also be a tool that advocates can use to ensure children do not have to experience being without a home.

We are hopeful that you will support HF 4950 which would greatly help us in the work to better support pregnant and parenting youth and towards our larger goal of reducing and ending homelessness. It goes without saying that Minnesota's children and youth should never have to experience homelessness. Raising children while experiencing homelessness is incredibly challenging - we have worked with young people who are trying the best they can to raise their babies and young children out of cars, vans, couch hopping, staying in emergency shelters or much worse situations. As a state we know that we are lacking the support that these young families need and deserve.

Sincerely,

Matt Traynor
Interim Executive Director
MN Coalition for the Homeless



March 24, 2024

Chair Pinto and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN. 55155

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Children & Families Finance and Policy Committee,

Thank you for your commitment to the youth, adults and families experiencing homelessness, in our communities across our state.

I am writing this letter in support of HF 4950 which would provide funding for a statewide study on pregnant and parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness.

Oasis for Youth is a community organization based in Bloomington that provides a network of resources for youth and young families experiencing or at risk of housing instability and homelessness. Nearly one-third of the youth we work with are pregnant and/or parenting. We witness the challenges that this unique population faces on a daily basis when seeking safety, stability and opportunity. We are committed to ensuring that the system of supports fully recognizes and addresses the needs of these incredible young people and their children.

This study would help us determine the statewide numbers of youth who are pregnant and/or parenting while experiencing homelessness. It would also help us to determine how best to provide support for the youth headed families (which is unique and different than adult headed families) along with the gaps in emergency shelter, housing, and services that we have for this population. Youth with lived experience would be involved throughout various stages of the study.

We are counting on your support of HF 4950, which takes a critical step toward understanding and addressing the needs of pregnant and parenting youth, and supports our shared goal of reducing and ending homelessness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jess Nelson', is written over a thin horizontal line.

Jess Nelson
Executive Director



Board of Directors

Jamar Hardy, Chair
Edina Realty

Jason Marvin, Vice-Chair
*Boeckermann, Graftstrom,
& Mayer, LLC*

Michael O'Neil, Treasurer
Target

Matt Amendola
General Mills

David Behrens
Graco

LaVina Brown
Former Client, City of Minneapolis

Kendra Garrett, Ph.D.
*St. Catherine University/University
of St. Thomas*

Jade Jorgenson
Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.

Craig A. Kepler
Best & Flanagan, LLP

Arianna Orcutt
PNC Bank

Cristen Purdy
Choice Bank

Kirsten Theisen
Target

Beth Holger
*CEO
The Link*

Community Advisory Board

Tom Nordyke, Chair
Nordyke Inc.

Judge Diane Alshouse
Retired Ramsey County Judge

Senator Scott Dibble
State Legislator from District 61

Commissioner Laurie Halverson
Dakota County Commissioner

Kelley Lindquist
Art Space

Jim Marshall
*Founder
Former Vikings Player*

Oscar Reed
*Founder
Former Vikings Player*

Gene Scapanski
*Former Link Board Chair
Retired Professor
St. Thomas University*

March 22, 2024

Chair Pinto and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN. 55155

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Children & Families Finance and Policy Committee,

First and foremost thank you all for your strong support for youth, adults and families experiencing homelessness and for supporting historic and critical investments last session! We continue to be very grateful for your support-and although this is Incredible progress the work of course continues!

I am writing this letter in support of HF 4950 which would provide funding for a study on pregnant and parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness across our state. The Link is a youth and adult led nonprofit based in north Minneapolis that provides a continuum of services, emergency shelter and housing for youth and young families who are experiencing homelessness, are victim-survivors of sex trafficking or who are involved in the juvenile justice or foster care systems. We operate several programs for pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness including our Young Families Program which provides 26 units of supportive housing for young families (including single mothers or fathers with their children, heterosexual or same sex couples) in Minneapolis. We see first hand the real struggles that these young families are going through and want to find ways to strengthen our state's support for these incredible young people and children!

It goes without saying that Minnesota's children and youth should never have to experience homelessness. Raising children while experiencing homelessness is incredibly challenging - we have worked with young people who are trying the best they can to raise their babies and young children out of cars, vans, couch hopping, staying in emergency shelter or much worse situations. As state we know that we are lacking the supports that these young families need and deserve. This study would help us to determine the statewide numbers of youth who are pregnant and/or parenting while experiencing homelessness across our state. It would also help us to determine how best to provide support for the youth headed families (which is unique and different than adult headed families) along with the gaps in services, emergency shelter and housing that we have for this population. The study would include youth with lived experience of We are hopeful that you will support HF 4950 which would greatly help us in the work to better support pregnant and parenting youth and towards our larger goal of reducing and ending homelessness.

Sincerely,

Beth Holger, CEO



March 25, 2024

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Children and Families Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share **Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota's support of House File 4950.**

LSS is a provider of essential services across all 87 counties with more than 2,500 employees who serve one in 63 Minnesotans every year. This includes statewide services for youth experiencing homelessness, survivors and victims of sex trafficking, and preventative supports through wraparound services to families. These programs serve 41 counties and are rooted in the following communities and their surrounding areas: Duluth, Virginia, Brainerd, Willmar, St. Cloud, Mankato, Rochester, and the seven-county metro area.

In Saint Paul, LSS operates a group home (LifeHaven) that provides transitional housing for up to 6 minor mothers ages 16 to 17 and their children. LifeHaven is the only supportive housing program in Ramsey County for minor-headed families experiencing homelessness, providing a critical service to two generations. Across the state, LSS also provides support to youth-headed families aged 18-24 who've experienced homelessness with housing assistance, case management, advocacy, independent living skills education, and parenting skills education.

The study proposed in House File 4950 will help us determine the statewide numbers of youth who are pregnant and/or parenting while experiencing homelessness. It will also help to determine how to best provide support for the unique needs of youth-headed families and it will identify the gaps in existing services and supports, including emergency shelter and housing, for this population.

The findings of this study will help LSS and other service providers strengthen a continuum of services for youth that build on their assets and strengths, connect them with supportive adults to ensure stability, and create a future that fulfills their potential.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity. Please contact Erin Sutton, LSS' Senior Director of Advocacy, at erin.sutton@lssmn.org if we may provide further information on this deeply important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen P. Kingsley".

Karen Kingsley

Shykes
Senior Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn Shykes".

Dawn

Senior Director



AMHERST H.
WILDER
FOUNDATION

ESTABLISHED 1906

Here for good.

WILDER RESEARCH
451 Lexington Parkway
North
Saint Paul, MN 55104
651-280-2700
FAX 651-280-3700

www.wilderresearch.org

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Heather Britt

March 22, 2024

Chair Pinto and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy
Committee

Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN. 55155

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Committee,

We are writing this letter in support of HF 4950, which would provide funding for a collaborative, in-depth study on pregnant and parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness across our state. The Link, who will be leading these efforts along the Wilder Foundation (serving as a research partner), is a youth and adult led nonprofit based in north Minneapolis. The Link provides a continuum of services, emergency shelter and housing for youth and young families who are experiencing homelessness, are victim-survivors of sex trafficking or who are involved in the juvenile justice or foster care systems.

This study will help to determine the number of youth who are pregnant and/or parenting while experiencing homelessness across our state, gaps in existing services that are intended to serve this community but often fall short, and approaches for how to best support youth headed families. This study will not only utilize data, but will engage youth with lived experience. This a unique population, with unique needs that are not easily met with existing services intended to serve the general adult-headed families.

It goes without saying that Minnesota's children and youth should never have to experience homelessness. Raising children while experiencing homelessness is incredibly challenging. The outcome of this work will support the services these young families need and deserve.

Please reach out to us with any questions, sincerely,

Rebecca Sales
Co-Director, Minnesota Homeless Study
Wilder Research

Adrián Rafael Magaña
Director of Public Policy & Community Relations
The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation