



February 7, 2023

Chair Michael Howard and Members
House Housing Finance and Policy Committee

RE: Support of Bring it Home, Minnesota HF 11

Dear Chair Howard and Committee Members,

People Serving People is the region's largest and most comprehensive shelter for families experiencing homelessness. We also work to prevent the experience of homelessness with families in our community. We write today to express strong support for HF11, Bring it Home, Minnesota. This bill would create a statewide rental assistance program that would provide vouchers for everyone who qualifies across the state.

We need a solution as big as the problem. Bring it Home provides that solution and would help all aspects of housing. At People Serving People, our families are working hard on their journey toward stability. With the end of the eviction moratorium and COVID assistance programs, as well as persistent social inequities and unprecedented inflation, families are fighting harder than ever to remain stably housed.

Since January of last year, we have seen a fast increase in the number of families requesting flexible prevention support for things like security deposits, back rent, and other basic necessities. Direct financial support helps families with these crucial expenses so that they can afford to stay in their homes. Because of our own limited funding, one month we received 40 calls for assistance and could only assist an additional 2 families. We've learned from other partners in Hennepin County that there has also been an increase in requests for emergency assistance. **The takeaway from these profound needs is clear: We need to change how we approach rental support in Minnesota.**

Over the summer, we reached capacity – all our 99 shelter rooms were full. By the end of 2022, there were nearly 3x the number of families in need of shelter than there was capacity to serve county wide – that's nearly 500 children and 300 caregivers in Hennepin County alone.

This bill would allow families to stay stably housed within their community. This allows families to stay rooted near their place of work and their children's schools, while being surrounded by neighbors and friends. **Helping families stay housed in their community will prevent family homelessness.**

Please support this bill in committee today and as a priority for your caucus. Everything starts with home and this substantial investment will be the foundation for a Minnesota where all can thrive.

Thank You,

Rinal Ray
CEO