

March 9th, 2022

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Human Services Reform Finance & Policy,

The elected and appointed members of the Ramsey County Continuum of Care write to offer our support for Senate File 3710, a request to sustain services for families and individuals currently experiencing homelessness.

We are the leaders of housing, emergency shelter and direct services across Ramsey County. Local government and community partnerships have been critical to our ability to continue operations safely serving those in need during the pandemic, and we are grateful for the additional leadership and financial investments made by Ramsey County and the City of Saint Paul to bolster a temporary emergency response to the joint homelessness and pandemic crisis.

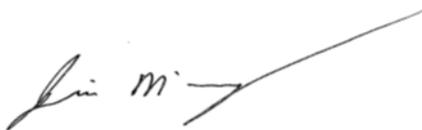
Beyond immediate response, Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul have also committed \$74 million over the next 5 years to build deeply affordable housing. We are excited and grateful for this investment, but housing development and construction takes time.

Ramsey County and the City of Saint Paul have been working with us to make the most of every dollar to support individuals experiencing homelessness, but time has run out. Without additional investment, temporary emergency programs will close, leaving hundreds of families and individuals nowhere to go, as our pre-pandemic system will not be able to support the significant influx of need. It should be highlighted that only 42% of individuals who are leveraging this temporary emergency response shelters identify Ramsey County as their county of residency prior to experiencing homelessness. This is truly a state and regional issue.

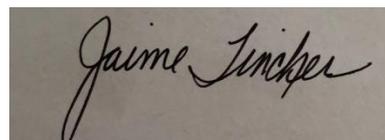
The Heading Home Ramsey proposal would immediately invest in four critical areas that are at risk of ending this spring: shelter for families with children, shelter for single adults, a program focused on those individuals needing concentrated help, and emergency day services. These proposals were recommended by our steering committee comprised of knowledgeable shelter providers, day service organizations, and local government and community members. Collectively, these investments would fill a critical gap in homeless response resources and provide hundreds of Minnesotans safe and dignified shelter until affordable housing developments – currently underway – can be completed.

As local partners strive collectively to meet both the immediate needs of the homelessness crisis and longer-term affordable housing needs, we ask for your support of this proposal to ensure safe, dignified continuity of services for those in need.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Jim McDonough,
Ramsey County, Chair



Deputy Mayor Jaime Tincher,
City of Saint Paul, Vice Chair

Heading Home Ramsey Governing Board

Commissioner Jim McDonough, Ramsey County, Chair
Deputy Mayor Jaime Tincher, city of Saint Paul, Vice Chair
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Lucy Zanders, Theresa Living Center
Otis Zanders, Ujamma Place

Heading Home Ramsey Steering Committee:

Keith Allen, M Heath Fairview
Nikki Beasley, YWCA
Ricardo Cervantes, City of St. Paul
KaTina Cummings, Catholic Charities
Alexis Dauenhauer, American Indian Family Center
Sue Hackett, Aeon
Holly Henning, Ain dah Yung Center
Helene Freint, Health Care for Homeless
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Andrea Hinderaker, Model Cities
Jacqueline Jones, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
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Jesse Mollner, St. Paul Police Department
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Maria Wetherall, Ramsey County

