



February 1st, 2023  
Chair Wiklund  
Members of the Health & Human Services Committee

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

Grace House of Itasca County is writing to express support for SF388. Grace House is a homeless shelter located in Grand Rapids serving people experiencing homelessness. We have been advocating along with the MN Coalition for the Homeless and Homes for All to end unsheltered homelessness for several years and this package will make it that much closer to becoming a reality. We know that shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness. We want to lift up three of the items listed in the legislation, but we fully support the entire bill.

**\$150 million for Emergency Shelter Facilities**

Every region in the state needs access to additional shelter spaces, and this statewide funding source would provide opportunities for shelters to generate new models to meet the need such as those that are culturally responsive, gender affirming, accessible, and are low barrier; shelter is the first step to finding permanent housing for families, individuals, and seniors experiencing homelessness.

**Grace House** has been working for the past year on a remodel and addition, which would provide private rooms for our guests, each with its own restroom and the privacy and dignity of having their own space to call home for a temporary period. We have contracted with LHB for the first phase of the work, which is now complete and in January entered into another LHB contract for the Schematic Design and a preliminary Construction Cost Estimate. Our goal is to have a shovel ready project when funding becomes available. The projected cost at this time is about \$1.5 million and would increase our capacity from our current 10 bed facility to 16 - 20 private beds. The SF388 bill would be very helpful in completing our project along with many across the state.

**\$40 million in 2024/25 and \$70 million in 2026/27 for the Emergency Services Program (ESP)**

We are thrilled that SF388 includes funding for ESP. This funding will allow organizations and shelters like ours and local communities to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness through supporting shelters, outreach, motel vouchers, and other key resources and services. This increase will be key to supporting both new and existing shelters in providing services to people experiencing homelessness.

**\$9 million for the Transitional Housing Program (THP)**

Along with responding to our unsheltered homelessness crisis, SF388 includes funding for THP which is vital for many individuals and families leaving shelter. THP helps individuals and families obtain stable housing where they can develop good rental history while finding a permanent housing destination.

In addition to the above priorities, Grace House supports the remaining items included in SF388:

- **Homeless Management Information System**
- **Homeless Youth Act**
- **Homeless youth; chosen family grants**

We applaud the leadership for bringing this bill forward. Shelter saves lives and housing ends homelessness.

Sincerely,  
Ron Oleheiser  
Executive Director

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