

Senate Health and Human Services Committee Hearing - Friday, March 24, 2023 at 1pm

Family Supportive Housing Programs Funding - SF 673

Testimony from Sarah Koschinska, Project for Pride in Living

Chair Wickland and members of the committees, my name is Sarah Koschinska and I am the Senior Director of Resident Services with Project for Pride in Living (PPL).

- For over 50 years, PPL has worked to build the hope, assets, and self-reliance of families who have lower incomes by providing transformative affordable housing and career readiness services.
- At PPL, we firmly believe that housing isn't a roof, it's a floor. It's the foundation to building a better life for families. We know when families are in stable housing, their health gets better, their children do better, and they develop their education and job skills.
- We own, manage, and/or provide services over 1,600 units of affordable housing in Minneapolis and St. Paul as well as several western suburbs. Close to 3,500 folks live with PPL every night, nearly half of them children. Half of our units are considered supportive housing, serving households making 30% or less of the area median income and coming out of homelessness.
- We are very grateful that you're considering a **new funding stream dedicated to family supportive housing services**, which is critical to provide the two-generational wrap-around supports for families and their children exiting homelessness and working toward housing stability and breaking the cycle of poverty.
- PPL has five family supportive housing programs in which **94% of the households are headed by adults over 24 years in age**. PPL partners with families to **set and achieve person-centered goals** on tenant education, eviction prevention, benefits navigation & increasing income, and physical, mental and chemical health. Equally important are **youth and parenting services** that include early childhood screening, school navigation, child welfare systems support, youth mental health, and mentorship.
- At PPL's Fort Road Flats site in St. Paul our long-time youth coordinator recently worked with parents and their teens on high school attendance, teen chemical health issues and getting summer jobs. The long-standing, trusting relationship and regular on-site

presence of this staff, made all the difference in addressing these things early and successfully.

- Current funding for family services is not adequate. At PPL, **it costs \$13,000 - \$17,000 per household annually to provide support services to families. We braid together funding from the private and public sector, and always have a gap.**
- You may be familiar with State programs such as Housing Support and the new Medicaid Housing Stabilization Services – neither which provides solid funding for family services.
- In short, **existing programs don't provide anywhere close to adequate funding**, and each year, it gets harder and harder to maintain these programs at their current level. It also makes it difficult to build new family supportive units knowing that adequate support funding won't be available.
- By **passing Senate File 673 and creating a dedicated source for family supportive housing service funding, existing programs can be maintained and new housing units for our lowest income families can be developed.**
- I'd like to thank Senator Maye Quade for carrying this bill. Thank you for the opportunity today, I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.