



April 15, 2024

The Honorable Lindsey Port
Chair, Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee
3213 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St Paul, MN 55155

Via email

Re: Support for S.F. 4158

Dear Chair Port and members of the Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee of the Senate

We write in support of S.F. 4158, including increased funding for FHPAP (Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program). and policy provisions that support expediting emergency rental assistance.

Families across Minnesota continue to need significant help to prevent evictions and maintain access to stable homes.. FHPAP is a critical lifeline for those who have experienced a crisis that makes them at risk of homelessness. FHPAP provides direct assistance that is flexible to the needs of the applicant with the goal of ensuring stable housing - examples of its uses include payment of back rent, utilities, mortgage, deposits and fees, case management, and rapid rehousing assistance.

As FHPAP provides direct assistance to address housing emergencies, any increase will mean more households will have the means to ensure their housing stability, which is critical to the health, well-being, and future potential of children and families. With some jurisdictions reporting an average household payment of \$3,000 for FHPAP assistance, over 330 households will receive life-supporting housing stability assistance for every \$1 million provided. Without assistance, those same families face an increased risk of homelessness and harm to health, educational outcomes, work stability, and more.

As well, the ERASE campaign is grateful to see some of the recommendations of the Workgroup on Expediting Rental Assistance (WERA) included in S.F.4158, including, developing an assessment of the need for rental assistance, working with administrators to simplify the application process, and developing e-signature options and criteria for measuring processing speed. We encourage the committee to continue to seek opportunities to implement the remainder of the WERA recommendations, as well as provisions to ensure processes are people-centered, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed.

The Minnesota ERASE Campaign (End Rental Arrears and Stop Evictions) is an effort to eliminate rental indebtedness, prevent evictions, and create support for long-term policy changes to end housing instability and homelessness. Co-convenors of the campaign include ACER (African Career Education Resource); Housing Justice Center, and MHP (Minnesota Housing Partnership).

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Nelima Sitati Munene, Executive Director
African Career Education & Resource Inc.

Margaret Kaplan, President
Housing Justice Center

Elizabeth Glidden, Deputy Executive Director
Minnesota Housing Partnership