



March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

RE: Support of HF470 and SF1049 on Early Learning Scholarships

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

At People Serving People, we work with families experiencing homelessness throughout Hennepin County. Our shelters provide supportive services for families and we operate two 4-star parent aware rated early child development centers- one on-site and the other in the community, our Center of Excellence. In our classrooms, early childhood educators utilize a trauma informed approach that focuses on social, emotional development, and executive function skills to prepare kids and families for kindergarten and beyond.

**HF470/SF 1049 supports both access to high-quality early learning for families and the educators who make that possible and is an investment worth making.**

Early childhood education is central to our work on preventing intergenerational family homelessness. It's an investment in the whole family, and particularly the youngest members of families. This is also about achieving more equitable outcomes for Black and Indigenous children that disproportionately experience homelessness. As the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families has shared, 66% of scholarship recipients identify as BIPOC and 43% of scholarships are awarded to those in a priority category: families experiencing homelessness, child protection, foster care involved, minor parent families, among others.

While People Serving People have been able to increase access to high-quality, parent directed early childhood education for families with the highest need, there are still thousands of families across Minnesota that need access to early childhood development.

**Right now, an estimated 8,500 children are eligible for scholarships yet unable to get one due to lack of funding. This bill would stop that number from ballooning to 15,000 by avoiding a funding cut in FY 2026 and beyond.**

Additional funding for early learning scholarships is the way to get upstream to prevent families from entering shelters, or returning to our shelter multiple times in their lives.

Thank you,

Hoang Murphy

CEO



People **Serving** People

614 3<sup>rd</sup> Street South, Minneapolis, MN 55415 • 612.332.4500