

# Homeless Elders Program

**Minnesotans agree that we should take care of our elders. Yet, older adults are the fastest growing segment of our homeless population.**

**Older adults experiencing homelessness face complex challenges:**

- Most have chronic health conditions (i.e. physical illness, disability, mental illness, or substance use disorder).
- 90% are unable to work or complete some activities of daily living.

**Catholic Charities' unique Homeless Elders Program provides essential services to those with the most acute needs:**

- Expert case management.
- Connection to supportive programs like Medical Assistance, Housing Stabilization Services, and appropriate waivers.
- Placement in affordable, stable housing.

**Thanks to \$1.5 million of legislative funding in 2023, we have adapted and grown to meet the needs of Minnesota's seniors:**

- Wait times for services have been reduced from over 3 months to less than 30 days.
- Housing placements have doubled, helping more than 300 seniors move home.



***Catholic Charities requests a reauthorization of \$1.5 million for the Homeless Elders program, providing support and dignity for aging Minnesotans.***

**For more information, please contact:** Elizabeth Lyden, Vice President of Engagement at [elizabeth.lyden@cctwincities.org](mailto:elizabeth.lyden@cctwincities.org).



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## Carol's Story

In 2020, Carol was struggling to find affordable housing when she found herself in a Twin Cities shelter. There, she contracted COVID-19. She described this time as, "insane and scary. You're so displaced and you just lose touch. There was no place to go for peace and quiet — to get away from everybody else's problems so you could focus on your own."

While Carol recovered, she was connected to Catholic Charities' Homeless Elders program, which provides intensive case management and advocacy on behalf of vulnerable older adults. It was then that Carol met Case Manager Melea Blanchard. "If it were not for her, I don't think I would've made it," says Carol. "After I met Melea, I could see a little light at the end of the tunnel. It was like somebody actually cared."

Melea worked to find housing for Carol, and she now lives in an apartment in St. Paul. With stable housing, Carol has been able to manage her health needs. Carol lent her lived expertise at the Minnesota Capitol in 2023, testifying in support of Catholic Charities' Homeless Elders program:

**"Seniors are not disposable. We are not stupid.  
We deserve dignity and respect."**

## Financial Stewardship

Catholic Charities Twin Cities is an expert at delivering impactful social service programs, efficiently using public and private resources to maximize community benefit. The \$1.5M appropriation in 2023 was used to scale the Homeless Elders program to meet the rising needs of Minnesota's seniors.



*Doubled the size of the team to 10 staff, who expertly navigate complex systems on behalf of vulnerable seniors experiencing homelessness*

*Funding allowed the program to offer direct assistance that allows for rapid rehousing (e.g. damage deposits, medical expenses)*

