

HENNEPIN COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 6, 2025

Chair Port
Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3213
95 University Avenue W
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for SF 1511

Dear Chair Port and Members of the Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee:

I write to express Hennepin County's support of SF 1511, a bill to provide funding for the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP).

Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program funding provides critical emergency rental assistance for Hennepin County households at risk for eviction, and rental subsidies to support youth, adults, and families to rapidly exit homelessness and stabilize in permanent housing. This funding has enabled us to advance our goals around making homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring. Further progress toward these goals would be negatively impacted by the currently scheduled reductions in FHPAP funding.

This program has made a particularly positive impact during the current biennium through a series of funding appropriations from the legislature. Following these investments, Hennepin County and its portfolio of contracted providers prevented more than 1,300 evictions with FHPAP funding in 2024 alone through the provision of \$4.2 million in emergency rental assistance and culturally responsive support services. These investments have come at a critical moment as eviction filings have surged to unprecedented levels in Hennepin County. Heightened eviction trends have persisted for the last 3 years and have surged even further in recent months, with all-time single month highs in eviction filings in December 2024 and January 2025. Rental assistance stabilizes tenancies – benefiting both residents and property owners – and reduces pressure on emergency shelters and other crisis systems.

FHPAP also funded rental subsidies and supports to help 355 households to rapidly exit homelessness and stabilize in permanent housing through 2024. This was one of the critical interventions that helped reduce family homeless shelter use by more than 50% over 2024 as the number of families able to exit shelter each month exceeded the number of new families coming

in. Helping families with children swiftly exit homeless shelters to more permanent settings benefits their health, wellbeing and development.

Should FHPAP funding revert to the base funding in fiscal year 2026, Hennepin County estimates that the County and its contracted service providers would prevent 1,000 fewer evictions each year as compared to 2024 levels, and support 135 fewer households each year to exit homelessness. In the absence of a robust emergency rental assistance and rental subsidy portfolio, more households will become displaced through evictions and more households will experience lengthened episodes of homelessness. Additionally, a reversion to base funding levels would adversely impact our ability to work across the geographically and culturally representative network of Hennepin County service providers that has developed over the course of several years of investment.

At Hennepin County, we have made it a top priority to provide safe and stable housing for all individuals and families. As the largest FHPAP administrator in the state, we are writing to support S.F. 1511 and to underscore the importance of expanding investments in both individuals and families experiencing homelessness as well as at-risk, low-income households to sustain their housing.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Irene Fernando". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Irene" and last name "Fernando" clearly distinguishable.

Irene Fernando