



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

March 4, 2025

The Honorable Lindsay Port
Senator District 55
95 University Ave W.
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3213
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: YMCA Letter of Support for FHPAP Funding

Dear Senator Port:

I am writing to you today to advocate for the essential funding of the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP), particularly for youth at risk of homelessness. As an organization committed to addressing the root causes of housing instability, the YMCA of the North's Youth and Family Services have seen firsthand the effectiveness of prevention and intervention efforts. However, due to recent reductions in funding, we are concerned about the ability to continue providing these vital services, especially as youth homelessness continues to rise.

Youth homelessness is one of the most significant challenges our society faces. Historically, youth homelessness leads to chronic adult homelessness, but we know that the best way to prevent this outcome is through targeted casework. FHPAP provides essential funding for homelessness prevention and housing programming that interrupts cycles of poverty and homelessness in our state.

Our Homelessness Prevention program focuses on preventing homelessness before it begins by working closely with participants to identify the underlying causes of their housing instability. By offering financial support and 1:1 case management, we can address these barriers and fully prevent housing crises. This approach has proven extremely effective, and we are committed to maintaining our efforts to prevent youth homelessness and to ensuring long-term housing stability.

We have expanded prevention services to youth in Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, and Ramsey counties, yet the reduction in funding has already begun to create a gap in service. This gap means fewer youth are receiving the support they need, at a time when rent prices and inflation are continuing to climb, further increasing the risk of homelessness for young people. Reducing funding now could lead to a significant increase in youth homelessness, further complicating an already dire situation.

Additionally, FHPAP Rapid Re-Housing funding has allowed us to support youth and families for over 15 years. This funding provides essential rental stipends to stabilize housing, as well as wraparound services that address the root causes of homelessness—such as mental health challenges, chronic unemployment, and unlearned life skills. Our team works diligently with participants to build stability plans, empowering them to achieve their healthiest potential. This program has a proven

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record of success: On average, 85% of the youth and families who receive these services continue to be housed a year after exiting the program.

FHPAP funding has been instrumental in breaking the cycles of chronic homelessness, and we are proud of the work we do. The recent addition of FHPAP Fast Track Funding enabled us to house 40 additional youth and families in the past year alone. Unfortunately, we are now seeing a reduction of FHPAP funding in several counties, resulting in hundreds of youth and families losing access to the financial and community support these programs provide.

At the YMCA, the loss of funding would also result in a 10% reduction in our housing service workforce. This would significantly impact our capacity to serve at-risk youth and families, potentially increasing the likelihood of chronic homelessness for many young people. Without additional funding, we may lose the ability to help these vulnerable individuals regain stability and achieve independence.

Therefore, I urge you to consider increasing FHPAP funding to ensure that we can continue providing critical support to youth at risk of homelessness. The long-term benefits of prevention and stabilization are invaluable, and with adequate funding, we can help ensure that fewer young people fall into homelessness, improving their prospects for a better future.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how we can work together to prevent youth homelessness in our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Smith', with a stylized, cursive script.

Matt Smith
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