

February 11, 2025

To: Chair Port and members of the Senate Housing & Homelessness Prevention Committee

From: Craig Freeman, Director of Development, Alliance Housing, Inc.

Chair Port and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of Alliance Housing, Inc. to express our strong support for SF 2214/HF 2276, appropriating funding for the Minnesota Homeless Study. The study has been a critical resource in understanding and addressing homelessness in Minnesota since 1991. It is unique in the United States in its partnership with tribal communities, as well as the comprehensive nature of the publicly available data collected over more than 30 years. The study is used to prioritize needs, identify systemic issues, and improve programs and policies to address homelessness in our state. An investment into this study represents incredible value, as the information is used to leverage and prioritize multiple other policies for Minnesotans impacted by homelessness and ensure that investments made are impactful long-term.

The Minnesota Homeless Study is absolutely essential to both how Alliance performs our work and how it is funded. The demographic numbers found in the study aid us in determining what type of housing is most needed now and what is likely to be needed in the future. For example, the Study makes it clear that senior homelessness is increasing. We can then factor this information into the planning process for future buildings. At the same time, knowing why people are experiencing homelessness is incredibly useful in determining our rental policies. Knowing that of 2023 respondents, 46% reported difficulty finding a home due to affordability, 31% due to credit issues, 20% due to an eviction, and 22% due to criminal history, informs Alliance's commitment to screening in, rather than out, those facing these barriers.

Additionally, having access to the Study's data is vital to obtaining foundation, corporate, and individual giving. The data is a central part of most Alliance grant applications because it allows us to demonstrate to donors exactly how our work impacts the community. We are thereby able to bring in private money that lessens the amount we, and every other housing organization, need from the State to provide the vital service of housing Minnesota's population.

The Minnesota Homeless Study and the companion Reservation Homeless Study are invaluable resources for anyone working to address homelessness and housing instability across the state. This includes state, county, and city officials, homeless service providers who are on the front lines supporting those individuals and communities most impacted by homelessness, and organizations that homeless individuals and families access for non-housing related services, such as healthcare, transportation services, and schools. Alliance Housing, Inc., calls on the committee to pass SF 2214/HF 2276 to ensure that the state continues to benefit from the insights provided by Minnesota Homeless Study data.



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Sincerely,

Craig Freeman
Director of Development
Alliance Housing, Inc.