



February 24, 2025

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

I am writing to express our strong support for SF 2214/HF 2276, which appropriates funding for the Minnesota Homeless Study conducted by Wilder Research. This study has been a pivotal resource in understanding and tackling homelessness in Minnesota since 1991. Its collaboration with tribal communities and the depth of publicly available data it provides is unparalleled in the United States. For over three decades, this study has helped shape priorities, identify systemic barriers, and enhance programs and policies aimed at reducing homelessness across our state. Investing in this study is not only prudent but ensures that we continue to make informed and impactful decisions to support Minnesotans affected by homelessness.

At Avenues for Youth, the data from the Minnesota Homeless Study has been instrumental in our strategic planning and service delivery. It allows us to gauge the effectiveness of our interventions and tailor our services to the evolving needs of youth experiencing homelessness, including those from marginalized communities. The insights gained have empowered us to secure funding and support for our initiatives, demonstrating the tangible benefits of data-driven decision-making. If this study were to end, our ability to advocate for and implement effective solutions would be significantly hindered, risking the progress we have made in addressing youth homelessness in our community.

The Minnesota Homeless Study, along with the companion Reservation Homeless Study, are indispensable tools for a broad spectrum of stakeholders. This includes state, county, and city officials, frontline service providers, and organizations that support homeless individuals and families in accessing critical non-housing related services such as healthcare, transportation, and education. We, at Avenues for Youth, urge the committee to pass SF 2214/HF 2276 to ensure the continuation of these vital resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "K. Meerse", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Katherine Meerse
Executive Director