



Legislative Report

Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project

Annual Report

Homelessness, Housing, and Support

Services Administration

March 2026

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I. Executive summary

The Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project is a two-year study assessing whether regular cash assistance paired with optional, youth-directed services can improve housing stability and well-being for young adults ages 18–24. The pilot prioritizes youth who face higher barriers to housing stability, including Black, Indigenous, and other youth of color; young parents; youth with foster care experience; and youth who identify as LGBTQIA2S+. The pilot serves 135 young people in Hennepin County, St. Louis County, and the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. It is implemented by Youthprise and community partners, with evaluation led by the policy research center Chapin Hall.

Study participants receive a monthly cash stipend to support basic needs and housing costs, along with flexible services. By October 2025, more than half of surveyed participants were paying rent with their name on the lease, and others were paying rent without being listed on the lease. Many youth secured housing without using other state or federal housing subsidies, relying only on the stipend. Housing outcomes varied by location, with rural participants generally finding housing more easily than those in urban areas.

Participants are making progress in employment and education. Young people are securing and keeping jobs longer and making more strategic employment decisions, though wages often remain below a living wage, and few receive health benefits. After stabilizing housing, many are pursuing postsecondary education or short-term credentials to support long-term employment.

The pilot has also identified system barriers that would need to be addressed to support broader implementation. These include inconsistent treatment of stipends as income by public housing authorities, uneven administration of Foster Youth to Independence vouchers, limited understanding of the stipend among some property owners and managers, and challenges in sustaining a large intergenerational governance structure within a pilot setting.

Overall, early results suggest that regular cash assistance paired with flexible, youth-directed services can improve housing stability for young people experiencing homelessness. However, specific policy and system changes are still needed to scale the approach statewide.

II. Legislation

Laws of Minnesota 2023, chapter 70, article 11, section 13.

HOMELESS YOUTH CASH STIPEND PILOT PROJECT.

Subdivision 1. **Pilot project established.** The commissioner of human services shall establish a homeless youth cash stipend pilot project to provide a direct cash stipend to homeless youth in Hennepin and St. Louis Counties. The pilot project must be designed to meet the needs of underserved communities.

Subd. 2. **Definitions.** (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given.

(b) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of human services.

(c) "Homeless youth" means a person 18 to 24 years of age who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The following are not fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residences:

(1) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;

(2) an institution or a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;

(3) transitional housing;

(4) a temporary placement with a peer, friend, or family member that has not offered permanent residence, a residential lease, or temporary lodging for more than 30 days; or

(5) a public or private place not designed for, nor ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Subd. 3. **Administration.** The commissioner, as authorized by Minnesota Statutes, section 256.01, subdivision 2, paragraph (a), clause (6), shall contract with Youthrise to:

(1) identify eligible homeless youth under this section;

(2) provide technical assistance to cash stipend recipients;

(3) engage with cash stipend recipients to develop youth-designed optional services;

(4) evaluate the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of the pilot program;

(5) collaborate with youth leaders of each county to identify and contract with the appropriate service providers to offer financial coaching, housing navigation, employment, education services, and trauma-informed mentoring and support; and

(6) submit annual updates and a final report to the commissioner.

Subd. 4. **Eligibility.** Homeless youth who are 18 to 24 years of age and who live in Hennepin or St. Louis County at the time of initial enrollment are eligible to participate in the pilot project.

Subd. 5. **Cash stipend.** The commissioner, in consultation with Youthprise and Hennepin and St. Louis Counties, shall establish a stipend amount for eligible homeless youth who participate in the pilot project.

Subd. 6. **Stipends not to be considered income.** (a) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, cash stipends under this section must not be considered income, assets, or personal property for purposes of determining eligibility or recertifying eligibility for:

(1) child care assistance programs under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 119B;

(2) general assistance and Minnesota supplemental aid under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 256D;

(3) housing support under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 256I;

(4) the Minnesota family investment program and diversionary work program under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 256J; and

(5) economic assistance programs under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 256P.

(b) The commissioner must not consider cash stipends under this section as income or assets for medical assistance under Minnesota Statutes, section 256B.056, subdivision 1a, paragraph (a); 3; or 3c.

Subd. 7. **Report.** The commissioner, in cooperation with Youthprise and Hennepin and St. Louis Counties, shall submit an annual report on Youthprise's findings regarding the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of the homeless youth cash stipend pilot project to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over homeless youth policy and finance by January 15, 2024, and each January 15 thereafter.

Subd. 8. **Expiration.** This section expires June 30, 2027.

III. Introduction

Purpose of report

This report is submitted to the Minnesota Legislature pursuant to 2023 Minnesota Session Law, chapter 70, article 11, section 13, which requires an annual report on the Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project. The Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project provides time-limited, direct cash assistance to youth experiencing homelessness to support housing stability and other basic needs.

The purpose of this report is to update the Minnesota Legislature on Youthprise and their research partner Chapin Hall’s findings regarding the cost effectiveness and efficacy of this pilot project. Youthprise is a nonprofit philanthropic intermediary that partners with youth and youth service organizations to share knowledge and spread best practices to advance outcomes for young people throughout Minnesota. Chapin Hall is a nationally recognized policy research center with expertise in youth homelessness and housing instability and a long track record of producing rigorous, policy-relevant evidence that informs state and federal decision-making.

Staff from the Department of Human Services (DHS) Homelessness, Housing, and Support Services Administration prepared this report using information provided by Youthprise. The report addresses:

- Project overview and reflection one year into implementation;
- Participants served;
- Early outcomes in housing, education, and employment;
- Updates on the One Minnesota Study, the evaluation component conducted by the policy research center Chapin Hall;
- Challenges; and
- Recommendations for scaling.

IV. Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project

Youthprise, community partners, young people, and their research partner, Chapin Hall, have designed a random assignment trial to evaluate direct cash transfers as an intervention for youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability in Minnesota. The pilot program, which began in November 2024, spans 24 months and connects 135 young people with direct cash stipends and optional youth-designed services to holistically empower transitional-aged youth within three regions: Hennepin County, southern St. Louis County (which includes the Duluth area), and northern St. Louis County. Eligible youth are aged 18–24, experiencing homelessness, and reside in Hennepin or St. Louis County at time of enrollment, as defined by legislation. Throughout the report, the terms “young people” and “youth” will be used to identify this population. All data shared in this report is directly from young people.

A. Project Overview

The goal of this project is to assess whether direct cash assistance helps youth experiencing housing instability and homelessness in Minnesota and whether it is a cost-effective use of public funds. State funds are allocated for direct payments to qualified young people, youth-directed services in northern and southern St. Louis County, and administrative support provided by Youthprise. The project uses private and local funds to support youth-oriented services in Hennepin County and a rigorous research component to evaluate the outcomes of youth over time.

Enrollment and Support Services

The project engages 135 randomly selected young people living in Hennepin County or St. Louis County at the time of project enrollment. Youthprise contracts with four community-based organizations to help implement the pilot and provide the optional youth-designed services: Bois Forte Band of Chippewa (which provides services to members and descendants across all three regions); YouthLink in Hennepin County; City of Duluth Youth Employment Services in southern St. Louis County; and Lutheran Social Services (LSS) in northern St. Louis County. Bois Forte Band of Chippewa serves 10 participants in each region for a total of 30 participants. Each of the remaining three organizations serves 35 participants in their respective geographic area. (See Table 1.) At the time of this report, all project sites have completed youth enrollment, and all program participants receive a monthly cash stipend.

Pilot participants complete a monthly survey that captures information about their payment, housing status, and other key metrics. Community-based organizations use this information to deliver individualized support. These monthly surveys act as natural touch points to prompt connection and support. The surveys have also shifted the dynamics between service providers and young people, creating space for participants to ask for what they need rather than follow a script of what needs to be done. Case management is youth directed, allowing participants to decide how often they meet with a case manager and what topics to focus on based on individual goals. Examples of services provided by community-based organizations include housing navigation, budgeting, independent living skills (such as grocery shopping, cooking on a budget, and financial capability), and career counseling (including college admission support and employment counseling).

Young people participating in the pilot are also noticing the state’s investment in youth and their futures. While many participants felt disconnected at the start of the program, young people are now seeing themselves more connected with their community and more interested in giving back.

- “I’m on the Duluth Youth (Action) Board. It brings me pretty close to the community.”
- “I wanna help the homeless more now that I know what the struggle feels like.”
- “I like to give waters that I have so people aren't going thirsty it'd been too hot.”

One young person in northern St. Louis County also secured a career pathway through the pilot.

Table 1: Enrollment Overview

Site	Number of Young People	Month Program Launched	Month Program Ends
<i>Moving Youth Along:</i> Hennepin County (YouthLink)	34*	December 2024	December 2026
<i>Youth Housing Stipend:</i> Duluth/southern St. Louis County (City of Duluth; Life House)	34**	November 2024	November 2026
<i>Ozhitoon Onwaachige:</i> Bois Forte Band of Chippewa; 10 young people in each geographic region	30	February 2025	February 2027
<i>Invest in YOUth:</i> northern St. Louis County (Lutheran Social Services)	35	March 2025	March 2027

Table 1 - Hennepin County and southern St. Louis County each started with 35 enrolled participants. *One youth in Hennepin County declined to continue in the program. **One youth from southern St. Louis County passed away while enrolled in project.

Participant Demographics

To align with the goal of serving communities that are often underserved, the pilot program focused outreach and selection on young people who are more likely to experience inequities. This included Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) youth; youth parents; youth with experience with the foster care system; and youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and two-spirit (LGBTQIA2S+).

Young Parents

Of the 130 participants who most recently completed the October survey, 35% are parents, together caring for 71 children. Young parents are often only served in the adult system, which denies them the opportunity to

receive specialized support. In the original program design, young parents would have received a larger monthly stipend. However, with a limited budget and a large number of parenting youth recruited, this approach was not implemented, and young parents were provided the same stipend level as non-parents. This decision was made to ensure that parenting youth were not unintentionally kept from accessing the program.

Youth with Former Foster Care Experience

Overall, 32% of participants in the project are youth with experience in the foster care system. In Hennepin County, youth foster care experience was prioritized as a population project enrollment. As a result, 54% of the participants in the Moving Youth Along project are youth with previous foster care experience.

LGBTQIA2S+

The legislation that created the pilot named LGBTQIA2S+ as a priority population to serve. Young people are continually learning about themselves and building rapport with service providers. Youthrise acknowledges the intimacy that comes with asking a youth to disclose certain parts of their identity. At the time of this report, 17% of young people chose to share that they are part of the LGBTQIA2S+ community compared to national estimates that up to 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ.¹ Youthrise and service providers intend to ask again midway through the project to see if others are willing to share now that trust has been built.

Black, Indigenous, People of Color

The legislation that created the pilot named Black, Indigenous, and People of Color as a priority population. Across all pilot sites, 78% of participants identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Additionally, 25% of the total project population are enrolled Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Members and descendants.

Compliance

Youthrise meets twice a month with each community-based organization to discuss the pilot structures, participants, data, and to problem solve concerns. Quarterly, there are “all sites” meetings for community-based organizations, state and county leaders, and researchers to review pilot data and explore opportunities for improving the pilot. Youthrise monitors financial reports monthly and manages budget to actuals with the state-approved budget.

Young people complete monthly surveys to verify receipt of stipend, share housing updates, and provide other key program data to ensure that youth-directed services are meeting what young people need.

DHS staff meet monthly with Youthrise for updates on the pilot, to problem solve concerns that have emerged, and to ensure compliance with legislation.

¹ <https://nationalhomeless.org/lgbtq-homelessness/>

Youth Safety

Youthprise is aware of the concerns from legislators that the Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot would create safety issues for youth. Youthprise and their contracted service providers are trained to identify youth safety concerns and exploitation and take proactive measures to ensure stipend funds stay with youth to use for themselves. Proactive measures include:

- Safety and boundaries discussions with youth during program orientation;
- Biweekly meetings between Youthprise and each service provider;
- Weekly communication between youth participants and case manager;
- Monthly surveys for youth participants to confirm or update payment information;
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) protected banking and cash app options for all stipend payments;
- Monthly meetings with DHS Staff and Youthprise representatives; and
- Quarterly meetings between Youthprise and all program sites.

In two instances, Youthprise and a service provider suspected youth participants were giving the stipend to a friend or family member. Payments for these youth were paused immediately, and case managers met with the youth to develop a plan that kept the money in their hands. Payments were resumed once the concern was resolved. Youthprise communicated these safety concerns to DHS staff for transparency.

B. Project Outcomes and Indicators

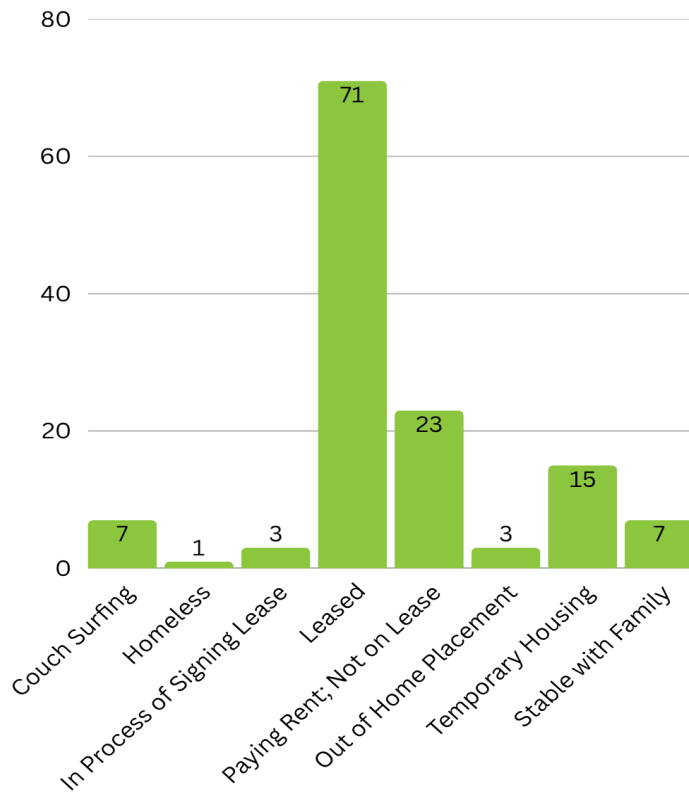
Housing

The Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project is a critical tool in making young adult housing insecurity brief, rare, and nonrecurring. In the October 2025 survey, **54% of pilot participants reported paying rent under their name on the lease**. An additional 18% reported paying rent but were not named on the lease. In some situations where youth are not paying rent, youth-directed services have helped repair broken relationships with families, which improved housing stability. (See Figure 1.)

Housing outcomes varied by location. Youthprise observed that young people in rural areas generally found housing more easily than in the metro areas. In Duluth, the opening of Brewery Creek, a subsidized housing development, helped eight enrolled participants move into housing quickly.

Survey results also suggest that many participants are securing housing without using other public housing supports. Housing supports in this section refers to financial supports young people received to subsidize rent and help maintain housing. Among participants who had signed a lease, **62% reported not using any state or federal housing programs**. (See Figure 2.) Based on these findings, Youthprise plans to further examine whether participants need additional financial housing supports beyond the monthly stipend to achieve long-term housing stability.

Figure 1: Participant Housing Status as of October 2025 (one year into the project)



N is 135; One person passed; one person is currently at boot camp and unable to complete the survey; one person left the program; one person has not yet completed the October survey; one person is being onboarded in Northern St. Louis County

Figure 1: Bar graph provides a visual representation of youth participants’ housing status as of October 2025. N = 135. Notes: One youth passed away. One youth is currently at boot camp and unable to complete survey. One youth voluntarily left the program. One youth has not yet completed the October survey. One youth is being onboarded in northern St. Louis County.

Figure 2: Do Youth Participants on Leases Receive other Financial Housing Supports?

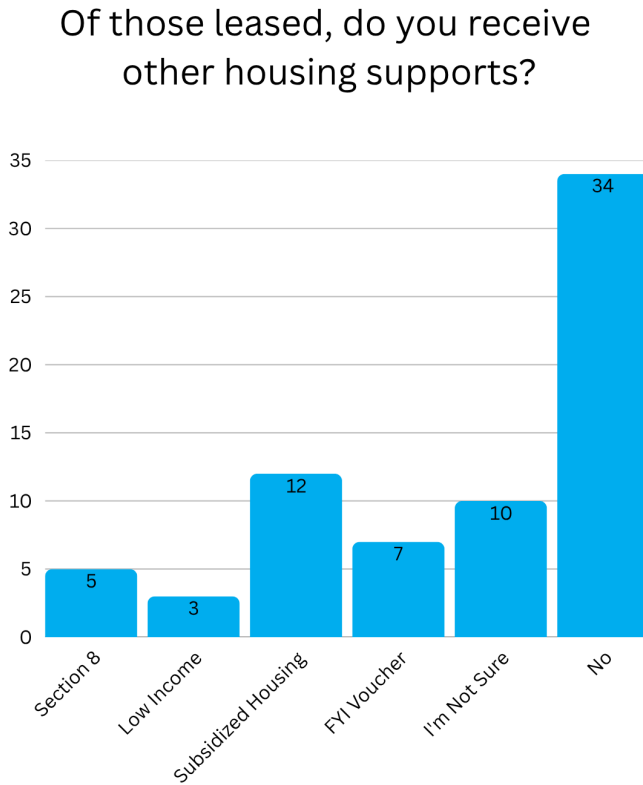


Figure 2: Bar graph provides a visual representation of number of youth participants on a lease who also receive additional financial supports to maintain housing. N=71. Only youth participants on a lease as of October 2025 were surveyed.

Employment

Each youth participant is offered individualized support to help them maintain housing after the program ends. Current participants are making plans to overcome obstacles to employment by ensuring they have employment documents, reliable transportation, appropriate clothes and gear, and other basic employment needs. They are also identifying education and skills needed for high quality employment. For this pilot, quality employment means having a family-sustaining wage, appropriate benefits (health insurance, paid time off, sick leave), and opportunities for growth.

Of the participants currently working, only 26% of youth receive any health benefits through their job. The average hourly wage for those working is \$18 per hour. By comparison, the MIT Living Wage Calculator² estimates that a living wage for single adults with no children would be \$22.98 in Hennepin County and \$19.79 in St. Louis County. With these numbers in mind, Youthprise supports young people in developing the skills or credentials needed to work toward a living wage that reflects their local area and family size by the end of the pilot. Of those participants who are not working, 18% indicated they have a disability that interferes with their ability to work, and most participants identified school as a primary reason why they are not working full time.

Young people enrolled in the pilot are reporting through monthly surveys that they are securing jobs and staying longer in their jobs. According to the community-based organizations supporting the youth-directed services, young people are making strategic employment decisions (finding appropriate work prior to leaving a job, working through conflict in the job) and creating plans for leveling up their employment to higher wages.

Education

Over 50% of participants asked for support or information on enrolling in postsecondary education. After securing housing, many were ready to pursue credentials to advance their careers. Youthprise facilitated meaningful connections to postsecondary education for youth participants by:

- Coordinating with the Office of Higher Education to build out resources to support case managers leveraging Minnesota Month for free college applications;
- Connecting youth who previously experienced fosters care with Fostering Independence Grants that would include the full cost of attendance;
- Connecting youth participants to the North Star Promise program and other similar programs; and
- Providing opportunities for short-term college credentials to support young people to get to careers that would support a living wage.

C. Challenges

Youthprise, youth participants, and community partners have exposed challenges with pilot implementation as the pilot interacts with existing systems. Young people who designed and fought for the Homeless Youth Stipend Pilot Project have indicated that the systems were not designed with young people in mind. Youthprise and community partners are noticing that housing stability systems are not working together, creating disconnect and frustration for youth participants. Recommendations to address challenges are outlined at the end of the report.

² MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Living Wage Calculator is an online tool that estimates the hourly wage needed to cover basic living costs, including housing, food, transportation, health care, and taxes, by county and household size. See: <https://millennialcities.com/interactive-data-tools/mit-living-wage-calculator/>.

Public housing authorities still count the stipend as income

Public housing programs are essential to helping pilot participants achieve housing stability faster. The intersection of public housing policies and the Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project is critical to supporting young people into their first housing and establishing a rental history to use when considering moving into private housing. Although the stipend was intended to be a flexible amount that could be used for rent, many young people in the pilot are intentionally moving into housing options with lower costs. This creates opportunities to use the two-year period to secure more employment credentials to ensure that paying rent is more manageable when the program ends.

Despite state legislation instructing state agencies not to count the cash stipend as income, some public housing authorities (PHA) in Minnesota have made different decisions. One case example involves eight participants who are in a new housing development managed by the local housing authority. This youth-centered housing development received federally-funded tax credits through Minnesota Housing and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and concluded that cash payments from the Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project must be included as income.

The Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA) changed how income was calculated for public housing programs and how to navigate guaranteed income programs like the Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project. HOTMA laws on public housing were introduced in January 2024, providing guidance to not count stipend payments as income. Youthprise reached out to HUD to discuss the situation happening with Minnesota PHAs and was told that when HOTMA is fully implemented, programs such as the Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project and other guaranteed basic income programs can be disregarded as income for the tax credit program (and other federal programs). There was no timeline provided for when HOTMA would be fully implemented at the federal level. Until this time, PHAs may choose to disregard HUD guidance with no consequences.

Public housing authorities do not reliably administer Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Vouchers

Over a third of the youth recruited to the Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project were youth who had previously experienced foster care. Due to the connection between aging out of foster care and the risk of homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) created the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) voucher program in 2019. The FYI program provides housing choice vouchers to eligible young adults with foster care experience who are at risk of homelessness, and it is administered by state public housing agencies. As previously stated in this report, some pilot participants must combine state or federal housing programs with the monthly pilot cash stipend to maintain housing. For youth who have experienced foster care, this could make the FYI voucher a necessary tool for achieving housing stability.

Some public housing authorities have indicated they prefer to administer standard Section 8 housing vouchers rather than Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers, because Section 8 vouchers can be used for a longer period. When public housing authorities choose not to administer FYI vouchers, young people must compete with the general adult population for limited housing resources. While some public housing authorities in

Hennepin County are administering FYI vouchers, most counties do not. Currently, only 16 counties have public housing authorities that use FYI vouchers as a tool to address youth homelessness.

Hennepin County has made the administration of the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Vouchers a key part of its goal to make youth and young adult homelessness brief, rare, and nonrecurring. To reach this goal, the county has hired a staff member to work directly with the public housing authorities and to ask that FYI voucher usage be included in their Heading Home Hennepin meetings (quarterly meetings where county and community partners share data, coordinate responses, and track progress on ending homelessness). This has helped keep youth with foster care experience, who face higher rates of housing instability, at the center of local housing conversations. Currently, 7 of the 45 participants in Hennepin County are using the FYI Voucher.

Private property managers, particularly in urban centers, continue to create obstacles to securing a lease, even with dedicated funding for housing

Youthprise and community partners have noticed that geography plays a role in how private property managers view young people for leasing purposes. Rural property managers have responded positively to the pilot and are offering leases to young people without co-signers. Youthprise provides a letter detailing participation in the pilot which serves as a guarantee for two years of monthly stipends and enables young people to make their first step into private leases. This guarantee has served as a key asset in getting young people leased up. Some property managers who have relationships or properties in the metro have also acted as bridges to support metro-area participants getting into private leases.

However, in urban areas where competition for apartments is higher, helping young people obtain a private lease is more challenging. Some property managers have struggled with the program not counting as income and not counting the stipend into the total amount that can contribute to the rent ratio. While program case managers and Youthprise staff are willing to work to help property managers understand the program, the housing shortage makes it easier for the landlords to just move on to the next renter.

Intergenerational Governance Structure

When Youthprise designed a governance structure for this initiative, the vision was to create an intergenerational model that brought together youth leaders, community-based organizations, state partners, recruitment partners, and Chapin Hall. The goal was to establish a shared decision-making body that reflected collaboration, accountability, and cross-system learning.

In practice, however, the structure proved difficult to sustain. As a pilot project, the initiative operated in a fast-moving and adaptive environment. With so many parties involved, it was challenging to schedule meetings that worked for all participants. Inconsistent attendance at meetings made it difficult to vote on priorities or build the cohesion necessary to move work forward. Many members discovered they were able to make more tangible progress during their individual partner site check-ins rather than through the full governance group.

At one point, the group's role evolved into more of a responsive advisory body, meant to offer insight on emerging issues. For example, the group was asked to discuss pilot participation for a recently incarcerated

youth. However, even this advisory role proved challenging due to differences in access, capacity, and availability between adult partners and youth participants.

D. One Minnesota Study

Chapin Hall will complete the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the pilot using a combination of administrative data, youth reported data, and surveys. Chapin Hall is a research organization with experience studying youth homelessness, cash assistance programs, and youth-led services. From July 2025 to December 2027, Chapin Hall will evaluate the Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project to assess whether financial support and related services improve housing stability and long-term outcomes. The evaluation, known as “The One Minnesota Study,” aims to understand whether providing regular income and tailored services can improve housing stability and promote human capital development among young adults (ages 18–24) who are experiencing unstable housing. Chapin Hall completed the Institutional Review Board process and secured permission to proceed.

The study will examine how the combination of income and supportive services influences (1) housing stability, (2) the formation of human capital (defined broadly as education, employment, health, and socio-emotional well-being), and (3) the overall transition to adulthood for young people with unstable housing histories. It uses a life-course and skill-formation framework derived from human capital theory, emphasizing how early investments in stability and skills can have compounding benefits over time.

Evaluation methods include longitudinal data collection, measures of well-being and human capital, and implementation studies grounded in a Continuous Quality Improvement Evaluation Framework (CQI/EF). This framework ensures that program learning is iterative and community partner-driven, with regular feedback loops connecting youth, providers, and evaluators. The pilot sites—Hennepin County, St. Louis County (Duluth and northern St. Louis County), and Bois Forte Band of Chippewa will test the feasibility and impact of the model, with support from Youthprise and local community-based organizations.

The anticipated outcome is evidence on whether a sustained cash-plus approach can help young people move from housing insecurity toward stability, well-being, and stronger participation in work, family, and community life.

Youthprise, Chapin Hall, and community-based organizations assisted in the recruitment of the control group of youth for the evaluation. These youth from each region will participate in biannual compensated surveys as they receive services as usual. The first biannual survey gathering data from intervention and control groups is currently live. An overview of the data collected through the survey is in Appendix VIII of this report.

The One Minnesota evaluation is generously supported by Constellation Lab, José Pacas, program officer. The Constellation Lab (CoLab) catalyzes, funds, and supports actionable research on poverty-fighting solutions.

E. Youth Voice

In each monthly survey, young people share wins and challenges. It has become another metric for case managers to track how young people are doing and what support may be needed next.

Employment:

"I have enough to eat! I'm now able to job search and work on resumes and formulate a budget and start saving!"

"Gain a tutor and pay off my car so I can get to work on time!"

"I'm currently job searching and working with an employment counselor to get a long-term career job!"

"I'm no longer in survival mode, so I can think about the future again."

"I got a house, and I just got hired back at my old job, so I can keep grinding and stacking money and trying to better my future. My goal is to take care of court and tickets with the money I save and any other debts, so I can build credit."

"Not having much experience in the work field makes it hard for me to find a job that will hire me."

"It's been really difficult maintaining a job with some transportation."

Career:

"I was able to pay for my doula program."

"Graduated nursing school! Just have to take my boards and I have a job lined up to be a RN in the ICU."

"I'm 50% finished with my GED!"

"I love learning how our system works and I'm currently going to school for my paralegal degree. It's a challenging yet very rewarding journey and the process is great."

Housing Stability:

"Having a home feels good."

"I've got an apartment for me and my baby."

"I have wonderful housing!"

"Sections 8 is really hard to come by, currently still looking but we are stable in the apartment that we are in now."

"Currently looking for section 8 in Cloquet it's a challenge."

“I had to move out of my apartment because it was a condemned building so now I’m at my mom's.”

“Still hard finding a place without a co-signer.”

Youth Directed Services:

“Really good – all my case managers are awesome super helpful [even] if they didn’t go through what I’m going through within my journey as a dad. Man, it’s definitely hard sometimes.”

“My case manager is AMAZING, makes sure to check up on me once a week just to see how I’m doing. I really really appreciate that.”

“Decorated my living room! I paid all my bills on time and my car has a full tank of gas :) I’m doing good and reconnecting with my heritage. I saged my home and it feels inviting. I learned more about my great grandma from my grandma Pam, and I feel very connected to her and the universe:).”

“Always grateful for the opportunity of your support. Without it I wouldn’t have stumbled across my strength. Your motivation gave me strength to be greater, not just for my daughter but for any women who believe they are alone.”

“Minimal engagement but they do check in.”

Health:

“Getting rid of unneeded distractions from my daily life slowly filling in those times with more productive things.”

VI. Report recommendations

Youthprise offers the following recommendations which could fix the challenges stated in this report. Recommendations should be used when discussing how to scale the pilot to a statewide, sustainable program.

Stipends should not count as incomes for housing programs.

When the Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA) is fully implemented, programs such as the Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project and other guaranteed basic income programs can be disregarded as income for the tax credit program (and other federal programs). The date for full implementation is a moving target, which has not helped to provide cover or clarification for Minnesota state programs to consider cash stipends as excluded or non-countable income when determining eligibility.

Public housing authorities should administer Foster Youth to Independence vouchers statewide.

While public housing authorities do have to be mindful of their utilization rate, their refusal to administer a youth-centered tool further affirms the need to scale up the pilot and create a sustainable, continuous program. Exploring ways to support administration with state dollars could extend the total pool of housing supports to young people.

Engage private property owners and managers in stipend implementation.

If this pilot is expanded, Youthprise or other intermediaries should engage private landlords in deeper understanding of the stipend program at the launch. Creating stronger coalitions of landlords and community-based organizations would ultimately net earlier housing wins for young people.

Develop an intergenerational governance model after pilot has been scaled up statewide.

While intergenerational governance remains a critical goal, it requires structure, clarity, and stability—conditions that are difficult to achieve within a pilot environment where rapid iteration is necessary. Once the initiative moves beyond the pilot stage, a governance model like this could thrive if it is grounded in a clear flow of communication, established decision-making frameworks, and dedicated time and space for participants to engage deeply in the work.

IV. Conclusion

This report summarized the implementation of the Homeless Youth Cash Stipend Pilot Project led by Youthprise and in cooperation with county, tribal government, and community partners, as required by the Minnesota Legislature. Implementation of the pilot project will continue throughout 2026, and the next legislative report will be released in January 2027.

VIII. Appendix

One Minnesota Study – Chapin Hall Survey Overview

1. Background and Demographics

Measures include:

- Date of birth, ZIP code, first language
 - Relationship status
 - Gender identity, transgender/intersex status, sexual orientation, and LGBTQIA2S+ identity
 - Race, ethnicity
-

2. Goals and Hopefulness

Measures:

- Two personally meaningful goals (open-ended)
 - Goal domain (education, employment, housing, health, relationships, finances, other)
 - Self-reported progress on each goal (5-point scale)
 - Hopefulness about reaching goals (5-point scale)
 - Barriers and supports needed (open-ended)
-

3. Education and Employment

Education:

- Highest education level completed
- Current school/training enrollment (yes/no; full-time/part-time; type of program)
- Confidence in completing program (5-point scale)

Employment:

- Number of jobs, hours worked, hourly wage
- Current work status (full/part-time, unemployed, etc.)

- Job satisfaction (1–10 scale)
 - Access to job benefits (yes/no)
 - Job search status and barriers to employment
 - Disability-related work limitations
-

4. System Involvement History

Measures:

- **Foster care:** lifetime involvement, placement type (family/tribal/stranger), number of placements, age at entry/exit, school or county changes
 - **Justice involvement:** lifetime arrest/incarceration before/after age 18
 - **Mental health diagnosis:** ever told by a provider, list of specific diagnoses (anxiety, mood, trauma, substance use, etc.)
-

5. Housing Stability

Measures:

- Childhood housing instability (before 18): doubled-up, homeless, housing worry
 - Adult housing instability: lifetime and recent experiences (shelter, couch-surfing, etc.)
 - Current housing type and description (own place, family, shelter, etc.)
 - Safety of housing (5-point scale)
 - Lease/rent payment status (yes/no)
 - Confidence in 30-day housing stability (5-point scale)
 - Readiness to live independently (5-point scale)
 - Open-ended causes of first homelessness
-

6. Food Security

Adapted from USDA Short Form.

Measures:

- Food insufficiency and affordability (3 Likert items)

- Frequency of skipping or reducing meals (numeric)
 - Hunger due to lack of money (yes/no)
-

7. Financial Security and Well-Being

Measures:

- Savings habits and presence of bank accounts
 - Credit/debt status and type
 - Financial confidence, stress, and satisfaction (multiple 1–10 scales)
 - Subjective financial well-being and control (Likert and frequency items)
 - Financial literacy and behavior (self-efficacy items: decision-making, saving, self-control, etc.)
 - Items from Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Financial Well-Being Scale and Financial Self-Efficacy Scale
-

8. Service Use and Access

Measures:

- Frequency and mode of contact with service providers (numeric + multiple choice)
 - Service topics discussed (housing, finances, emotional support, etc.)
 - Satisfaction with services (5-point scale)
 - Transportation mode and travel distance for services
 - Barriers to accessing services (open-ended)
-

9. Public Benefits

Measures:

- Current benefit receipt (SSI, SNAP, Medicaid, housing, etc.)
- Cash assistance (GA, MFIP, TANF, etc.)
- Changes in benefits and reasons (e.g., moved, income change, reapplication difficulty)
- Unemployment Insurance and per capita payments (amounts reported in dollars)

10. Institutional Contacts (Past 6 Months)

Measures:

- Visits or stays in healthcare, mental health, substance use, shelter, or correctional facilities (yes/no checklist)
-

11. Identification Documents

Measures:

- Possession, loss, or never having key documents (SS card, ID, birth certificate, etc.)
-

12. Parenting

Measures:

- Parental status (yes/no)
 - Parenting stress and satisfaction (Likert items: closeness, energy, finances, guilt, time, enjoyment, etc.)
-

13. Social Connectedness

Measures (Likert 5-point frequency):

- Perceived social support: understanding, listening, trust, advice, problem-solving help
 - Adapted from MOS Social Support Scale
-

14. Health and Well-Being

Measures:

- Self-rated general health (5-point scale)
- Mental health symptoms (PHQ-4: anxiety and depression items)
- Perceived stress (PSS-4 items)
- Substance use screening (CAGE-AID: 4 items)

15. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Measures:

- 10 standard ACE items (neglect, household dysfunction, abuse, etc.)
-

16. Program Impact and Perceived Change

Measures (open-ended):

- Biggest life changes since receiving cash transfers
 - Things participant started or stopped doing because of the cash
 - Reflections on program impact
-

17. Contact Information

Measures:

- Preferred name, phone, email, and secondary contact for follow-up