Homelessness in Minnesota: helping to connect people to the services they need

The Wilder Research Center, as part of its 2015 Minnesota Homeless Study, estimates that 15,000 Minnesotans are homeless on any given night. Children and youth age 24 and under are the most likely to be homeless in Minnesota. The study also identified five key reasons why Minnesotans experience homelessness:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of employment
- Chronic health conditions that impede housing retention
- Domestic abuse and violence
- Racism and other system inequities

The number of people seeking affordable housing throughout the state continues to rise, especially for families with children. In 2016, more than 550,000 Minnesotans spent more than 30 percent of their income for housing.

What services are available for adults and families?

DHS supports and promotes housing stability for all Minnesotans. The availability of safe, stable, and affordable housing is essential so that Minnesotans can live in dignity and achieve their highest potential. DHS is also committed to preventing and ending homelessness through its participation in the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness.

While DHS does not have a direct role in creating more affordable housing in Minnesota, it does play a significant role in providing the necessary supports to help people maintain stable housing, including income supports, services that help people access and maintain housing, one-time emergency payments and grants that support agencies working to end homelessness.

Income supports

- **Housing Support**: A state program that supplements a person’s income up to $904 per month for housing and food costs in approved group or community settings. Eligible individuals are 65 years or older, or are 18 years or older and have a certified disability or verified disabling condition that prevents them from working to the level of self-support.

- **Minnesota Supplemental Aid Housing Assistance**: MSA Housing Assistance provides help for housing costs for some people with disabilities who pay more than 40 percent of their income toward housing costs so that they have a choice about where they live.
• **Social Security Benefits Advocacy and SOAR** are programs that help people who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless and have a disability expected to last 12 months or more apply for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income benefits.

**Services to help people access and maintain housing**

• **Housing Access Coordination**: Services are available through some Medical Assistance (MA) waiver programs that help people plan for, find, and move to homes of their own that are not owned, leased or controlled by disability services providers.

• **Housing Support supplemental services**: The Housing Support program includes additional support services to certain Housing Support recipients when a person is not eligible for personal care assistance services through MA or MA Waiver programs.

**One-time emergency payments**

• **Crisis Housing Fund**: A state program that provides short-term housing assistance to people with serious mental illness whose income is being used to pay for inpatient or residential psychiatric or substance use disorder treatment that is expected to last 90 days or fewer. This program may help pay for rent, mortgage or utility expenses.

• **Emergency General Assistance**: Provides once-a-year financial assistance to help pay for food, shelter or utility expenses in emergencies. Applicants must apply for EGA through their county human service agency.

**Grants that support agencies working to end homelessness**

• **Emergency Services Program**: This program provides emergency shelter, motel vouchers, day shelter and essential services for children, unaccompanied youth, single adults and families who are experiencing homelessness. DHS awards funds biannually to local providers.

• **Emergency Solutions Grant**: The program funds rapid rehousing, and the operating and support service costs of shelter programs. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development allocates these funds to DHS, which awards funds to local agencies.

• **Housing Access Services**: Grant funding to help eligible adults move to homes of their own and ongoing supports. This program serves adults with a disability who want to live in a home of their own, and need help to find, move to, set up and then keep a home of their own.

• **Housing with Supports for Adults with a Mental Illness**: Supports permanent supportive housing options for individuals with serious mental illness, including transition services to find housing and tenancy sustaining services to keep housing.

• **HUD Section 811 Rental Assistance Program**: DHS manages the waiting list for Section 811, which offers subsidized rental units in designated properties for individuals under 62 who qualify.

• **Long-term Homeless Supportive Services Fund**: Supportive services to assist people and families with long histories of homelessness to increase their household’s resources and capacity to maintain housing.

• **Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)**: Provides homeless outreach and related services for people with serious mental illness, or serious mental illness with co-occurring substance use disorder, who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. PATH services include
community-based outreach, case management, mental health, substance abuse and other support services, as well as a limited set of housing services.

- **Transitional Housing Program**: Provides rental subsidies and supportive services to homeless individuals and families for up to 24 months to reach and maintain stability.

For accessible formats of this publication or additional equal access to human services, write to dhs.info@state.mn.us, call 651-431-4000, or use your preferred relay service. (ADA1 [9-15])