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Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
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Wilder Research Center
Homeless in Minnesota Report
WEB: www.wilder.org/research.0.html

HousingMinnesota
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Minnesota Housing Partnership
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StreetWorks Collaborative
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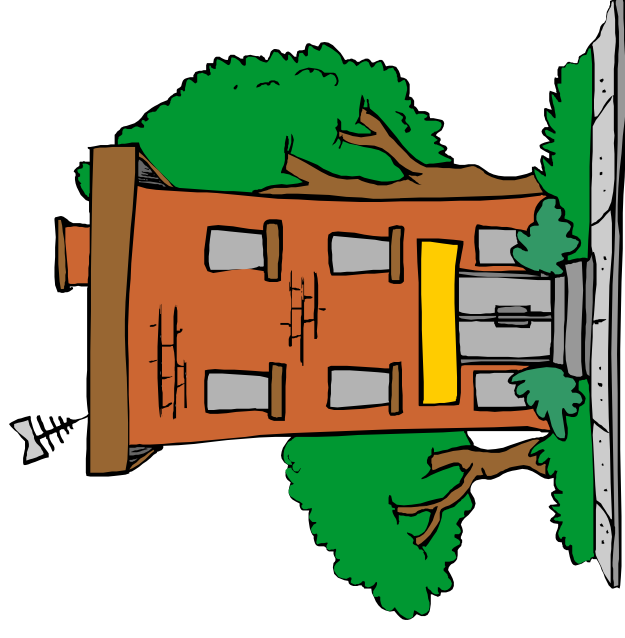
Take Action!

- Write and call your legislators, and ask them to support the Housing Solutions Act. To find out who represents you and how to contact them, go to www.leg.state.mn.us or call 1-800-657-3550.

- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper and inform your community about the need for more affordable housing in MN.

- Become active with MPIRG and help us fight homelessness and create safe and affordable housing for everyone!

Guide to MPIRG's Homelessness and Affordable Housing Campaign



MPIRG

MPIRG

Founded by students in 1971, MPIRG is a grassroots, student-directed, non-partisan organization that empowers and trains students and engages the community to take collective action in the public interest statewide. MPIRG works on nine campuses across Minnesota and involves students in every level of the organization. MPIRG is the largest organization in the state that works with students to increase their effectiveness in the public policy arena, building skills such as strategic planning, research techniques, grassroots organizing, and advocacy. MPIRG's agenda, which is determined by the elected State Board of Directors and its student members, includes environmental protection, affordable housing and homelessness, women's rights, and Fair Trade.

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Homelessness in Minnesota

Approximately 21,000 Minnesotans are homeless or precariously housed each night. About 50% are children or unaccompanied youth. Each night, over 1,000 individuals are turned away from shelters due to lack of space. The number of homeless families in MN grew 325% from 1991 to 2000. Homelessness disproportional impacts communities of color— 57% of homeless adults are of color, and 65% of homeless youth are of color. In the general population, only 9% of adults and 15% of youth are of color.

The Face of Homelessness

WOMEN- Nearly 1 in 5 women experiencing homelessness in MN say that one of their main reasons for leaving housing was to flee abuse.

CHILDREN- Youth experiencing homelessness have been physically or sexually abused at 2 to 3 times the rate of other children. 88% of homeless youth accompanied by parents attend school. 58% of unaccompanied youth attend school.

WORKERS- 41% of homeless adults are employed. Often, holding a full-time job is not enough to afford housing- 52% of jobs in Minnesota pay less than \$10/hour. Between 1974 and 1993, rent climbed 13% in dollars, but renters' actual income **declined** by 8%.

Why Affordable Housing?

Stable housing is critical to the well-being of families and communities. Housing allows individuals to hold steady jobs and contribute to the community, and allows kids to focus on school and developing friends and long-term relationships with others. Affordable housing also allows seniors with fixed incomes to live without worrying about losing their home.

Minnesota Needs:

Increased development of affordable housing!

What is “affordable housing?” Housing is considered affordable when the occupant is paying no more than 30% of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities. Families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. Minnesota needs investment in a broad range of housing strategies, and protection of the housing rights of the most vulnerable by enforcing fair housing laws, ending predatory lending, and reforming rental practices that unfairly target low income renters.



Is Your Housing Affordable?

Let's say you work 40 hours a week at a job that pays \$8 an hour. After taxes, you'll make about \$14,025/year. Divide that by 12 months in a year and multiply by 30%, and you get \$350. This means that in this scenario, in order for your housing to be considered affordable, you should be paying no more than \$350 a month for rent and utilities combined. How does your rent add up?

Support the Housing Solutions Act

The Housing Solutions Act dedicates new and significant funding for a wide range of housing needs throughout the state. The funds will come from a small increase in the existing deed tax. These new funds will be used for rental assistance or families with incomes of \$23,000 and below, the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing units and a new matching funding incentive program for local governments to invest in affordable housing in their community.