



Entry Form 2017 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Thursday, June 15, 2017, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Category:

Subcategory:

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

HFA:

HFA Staff Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? Yes No

Payment:

My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.
My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.

During the 2017 session of the Minnesota Legislature, Minnesota Housing proposed and received a new appropriation to launch an initiative called Homework Starts with Home. This initiative, proposed as part of Governor Mark Dayton's budget, will provide rental assistance and other supports to create housing stability among homeless and highly mobile students and their families. During a legislative session in which significant cuts were enacted across many areas of the State budget, Minnesota Housing's existing appropriations were protected, significant new housing bonding investments were approved, and the Homework Starts with Home initiative received \$2 million in new State funding. Minnesota Housing's legislative campaign to support this initiative included close coordination with other State agencies – especially the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness – and private sector partners, including the Homes for All coalition of housing advocates and the Heading Home Minnesota Funders Collaborative.

Description. In 2012, Minnesota Housing convened the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness made up of 12 members of Governor Dayton's Cabinet who lead agencies that serve Minnesotans experiencing homelessness. The Council established *Heading Home: Minnesota's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, which laid out its guiding vision of housing stability for all Minnesotans and specified strategies that these agencies would undertake to decrease and ultimately end homelessness. In 2013, Minnesota Housing partnered with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and community organizations to propose and secure new funding for a rental assistance pilot for homeless or highly mobile families with school-age children. This program, which served 121 families and 277 students, demonstrated a 90 percent housing stability rate for participating families and stabilized school attendance.

Building on the pilot's success, last summer Minnesota Housing and the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness engaged private, philanthropic partners participating in the Heading Home Minnesota Funders Collaborative (HHMFC) to take the effort to a larger scale. HHMFC awarded an initial \$300,000 to help launch the effort and committed to pursuing additional private resources among its member organizations. HHMFC remains engaged as a full partner in helping to design and secure needed funding for the initiative.

Minnesota Housing and the Minnesota Department of Education developed and supported a State budget proposal for the initiative, which was designed to:

- Diversify the available responses for homeless students and their families, so that supports and assistance could be tailored to each family's specific needs;
- Enhance the role of school partners in identifying students and families in need of support; and

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- Leverage other resources to increase the impact of dedicated State funding, including existing education reform initiatives and other public sector resources, as well as the private, philanthropic funds committed to the initiative.
- Significant impact the population of students and families experiencing homelessness.

After the Homework Starts with Home initiative was proposed as part of Governor Dayton's biennial budget, Minnesota Housing worked closely with MDE, HHMFC, and community-based advocates through the legislative session to build support for the initiative, calling attention to the number and wide distribution of homeless students in Minnesota, which has tripled over the last decade. More than 9,500 homeless and highly mobile students were enrolled in 1,241 public and charter schools on October 1, 2016, and these schools cover 77 of Minnesota's 87 counties in a wide variety of communities.

To support its legislative campaign, Minnesota Housing and MDE led a variety of activities designed to shape the dialogue about student homelessness and the impact of proven solutions:

- Minnesota Housing and MDE developed additional data and communications materials, including creating [publicly-available datasets](#) that provided a county-by-county and school-by-school breakdown of homeless student populations.
- Minnesota Housing and MDE launched a media campaign, including a [press conference led by Lieutenant Governor Tina Smith](#), to highlight the promising evaluation of the homeless and highly mobile rental assistance pilot and the need for broader invests.
- Several parents who participated in the pilot program testified and visited with legislators to give their personal stories of how the pilot program had improved performance of their children in school.
- In partnership with HHMFC, Minnesota Housing convened dozens of philanthropic organizations, community leaders, and researchers to build understanding of the devastating impacts of homelessness on child well-being and academic performance and to call attention to the opportunity presented by the Homework Starts with Home initiative.

Homes for All, a collaborative of housing advocates, also included the initiative in its legislative agenda, advocating for it through legislative engagement across its membership.

The initiative received bipartisan legislative support. When Governor Dayton signed the FY 2018 – 2019 State budget into law, these funds included \$2 million dedicated to Homework Starts with Home

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through new investments in Minnesota Housing's Housing Trust Fund rental assistance program and its Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) to provide families and youth with financial assistance, rental assistance, and supportive services. Despite deep cuts in other areas of the State budget, this new investment occurred without any loss in Minnesota Housing's existing appropriated funding and alongside an additional \$77 million in bonding for housing and homelessness-related investments.

State staff are currently preparing to deploy the appropriation, working in partnership with HHMFC to do so with private, philanthropic dollars committed to the initiative. Homework Starts with Home will soon begin serving an anticipated 200 homeless and highly mobile families and 400 students, connecting these families and students with the resources needed to achieve housing stability.