

MINNESOTA HOUSING

SPOTLIGHTING EFFORTS TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS IN MINNESOTA'S AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES

RESPONDING TO IMPORTANT HOUSING NEEDS: A number of issues contribute to homelessness among Native Americans on tribal land and in urban settings, including poverty, and chronic health, mental health, and substance use issues. A comprehensive approach is needed and has been piloted in Minnesota to address the complex issues that contribute to homelessness among American Indians.

While largely unrecognized in general homeless policy, homelessness is a significant and growing problem among American Indians, both on tribal lands and in urban centers. In Minnesota, a study identified more than 1,200 American Indians (or 30% of those interviewed) as homeless or near-homeless within six Minnesota reservations. In this study, nearly one-third of the homeless and near-homeless report one chronic health condition, 29% consider themselves to be chemically dependent, and 23% have a serious mental illness, with the rates for all these conditions higher for homeless individuals as compared to the near-homeless. The study also found low employment and income levels among the homeless and near-homeless and a history of unstable housing (59%). American Indian families are ten times as likely to be homeless as their white neighbors in Minnesota. Although American Indians are only 1 percent of all Minnesota parents, they are 11 percent of homeless parents.

EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS: Minnesota Housing has had a productive relationship with American Indian tribes and urban Indian communities dating back more than 25 years. This relationship has been built based upon Agency recognition of the unique government-to-government relationship between the state and Indian tribes within Minnesota. This relationship has been recognized as a national model and with the help of the Corporation for Supportive Housing, groundbreaking work has been done to build both permanent supportive housing and mutual respect and trust.

INNOVATION: In 2004, The State implemented a business plan to end long term homelessness. The core strategy of the plan is to create 4,000 supportive housing opportunities. To meet this goal, the Agency established a strategic priority to End Long-Term Homelessness. Earlier this year, that goal was adapted to Prevent and End Homelessness. In the strategy to address the issue with supportive housing, the state was recognizing the fact that people would need both housing and services to remain housed.

Permanent affordable housing with supportive services, or permanent supportive housing (PSH), has emerged as a promising intervention to address the root causes of homelessness among American Indians. PSH can be adapted to build upon the unique strengths of Native American culture, traditions and values, and the unique governance structure of tribes and human service systems. Initial American Indian PSH projects, supported by Minnesota Housing, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), the Enterprise Corporation, and other groups, show great promise and have been met with an overwhelmingly positive response from tribes and organizations serving American Indians. This expansion of services has improved access to health care, including mental health services for homeless individuals, families and youth.

A critical element of the work accomplished in Minnesota is due to the high priority tribal leaders have placed on the partnership and their willingness to participate in the leadership of the initiative. A comprehensive, multi-pronged approach such as this is needed to support tribes and Indian-serving organizations in order to build and operate PSH for Native Americans. Success in this work builds capacity in the PSH industry and on tribal lands to develop and operate PSH that is tailored to the unique

MINNESOTA HOUSING

SPOTLIGHTING EFFORTS TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS IN MINNESOTA'S AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES

cultural needs of this population. These efforts have leveraged additional resources for tribal lands and Indian-serving organizations in order to improve the housing and human service infrastructure.

DEMONSTRATING MEASURABLE BENEFITS AND A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS: Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a proven intervention for preventing and ending homelessness among homeless and at-risk families and individuals. For instance, 75% to 83% of tenants stay in PSH for a year or more, an impressive feat considering many had previously experienced prolonged periods of homelessness. In addition, despite the voluntary nature of services, PSH tenant utilization of needed services is quite high. The majority receive health services (81%), mental health services (80%), and substance use treatment (56%). Tenants participate in money management (65%) and receive employment services (41%). Due to receiving ongoing treatment, PSH decreases emergency room visits and hospital inpatient days by more than 50% and reduces use of emergency detoxification by more than 80%. PSH also decreases the use of homeless shelters, jails, and prisons for tenants as compared to control groups.

PSH has recently emerged as a promising intervention to prevent and end homelessness among American Indians. The basic model remains the same: safe, decent, affordable rental housing linked to client-centered, voluntary supportive services that focus on increasing housing stability and addressing the root causes of long-term homelessness (e.g. chronic health and mental health issues, substance use, barriers to stable, meaningful employment). The PSH model dovetails with how tribes have traditionally served their people (i.e. a holistic, community-based approach to service delivery). At the same time, tailoring the model for Native American tenants has resulted in several unique features and innovations. PSH offers great promise for breaking the cycle of poverty; substance use; untreated, chronic health and mental health issues; and homelessness for American Indians.

MEASURABLE BENEFITS – SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

Conifer Estates, Bemidji, MN – Conifer Estates is a 20 unit, new construction development with 16 PSH units, 3 Transitional housing units and 1 Caretaker unit). Conifer Estates is an excellent example of the emphasis and reliance on partnerships. The development consists of five (5) four-plexes located in the City of Bemidji in northern Minnesota. It is designed for families and individuals who are homeless and in need of supportive services in order to successfully maintain permanent housing.

Ten of the 19 units are master leased by Red Lake and Leech Lake tribes (five units each). Under the terms of the Master Leases Red Lake and Leech Lake make tenant referrals, work with management to select tenants for their Master Leased units and provides case management services.

One innovative element of this development is that tribal referral, tenant selection and case management functions insure cultural competency in the provision of all services. The tribal case managers fully inform clients on range of services, including mental health services, and service providers available to them, including tribal agencies. Services may be provided by tribal agencies or mainstream providers based on client preference. Both Red Lake and Leech Lake tribes have committed to providing transportation whenever necessary in order to access tribal services.

Other specific examples of projects on **tribal lands** are highlighted below.

White Earth project In 2007, a momentous milestone was reached as White Earth Human Services opened the doors of the first PSH project located on a reservation. The project secured Low Income

MINNESOTA HOUSING

SPOTLIGHTING EFFORTS TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS IN MINNESOTA'S AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES

Housing Tax Credits and other funds, raising \$5 million in non-tribal funds to build 20 homes. Intensive services are provided to help move families toward self-sufficiency and better health.

Bemidji Collaborative - A collaboration between the Beltrami Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, and Headwaters Regional Development Commission. It provides 20 PSH units for the long-term homeless that have mental health, chemical dependency and other disabilities, and are Leech Lake or Red Lake enrollees. Leech Lake and Red Lake Housing Authorities and Human Services departments are involved in this project, supplying Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) rental vouchers, referring clients, and providing services and cultural competency training.

Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa - Completed in 2010 the development of 24 PSH units , which they own, and operate , as well as provide supportive services. The Tribal Council is guiding the project for 14 families and 10 singles that were homeless or living in overcrowded housing *and* have histories of mental health and/or chemical use issues will live in the PSH. PSH services are provided in the housing or the community center.

Below are project examples of **urban**, PSH for American Indians.

Anpa Waste Numpa - The Division of Indian Work (DIW) provides advocacy, housing and services to American Indians residents of Minneapolis. DIW identified the need for affordable housing for homeless young families in its Teen Indian Parent Program. Anpa Waste Numpa provides 10 PSH units for families experiencing long-term homelessness. All residents are required to be working or in school, and receive case management from DIW home visitors.

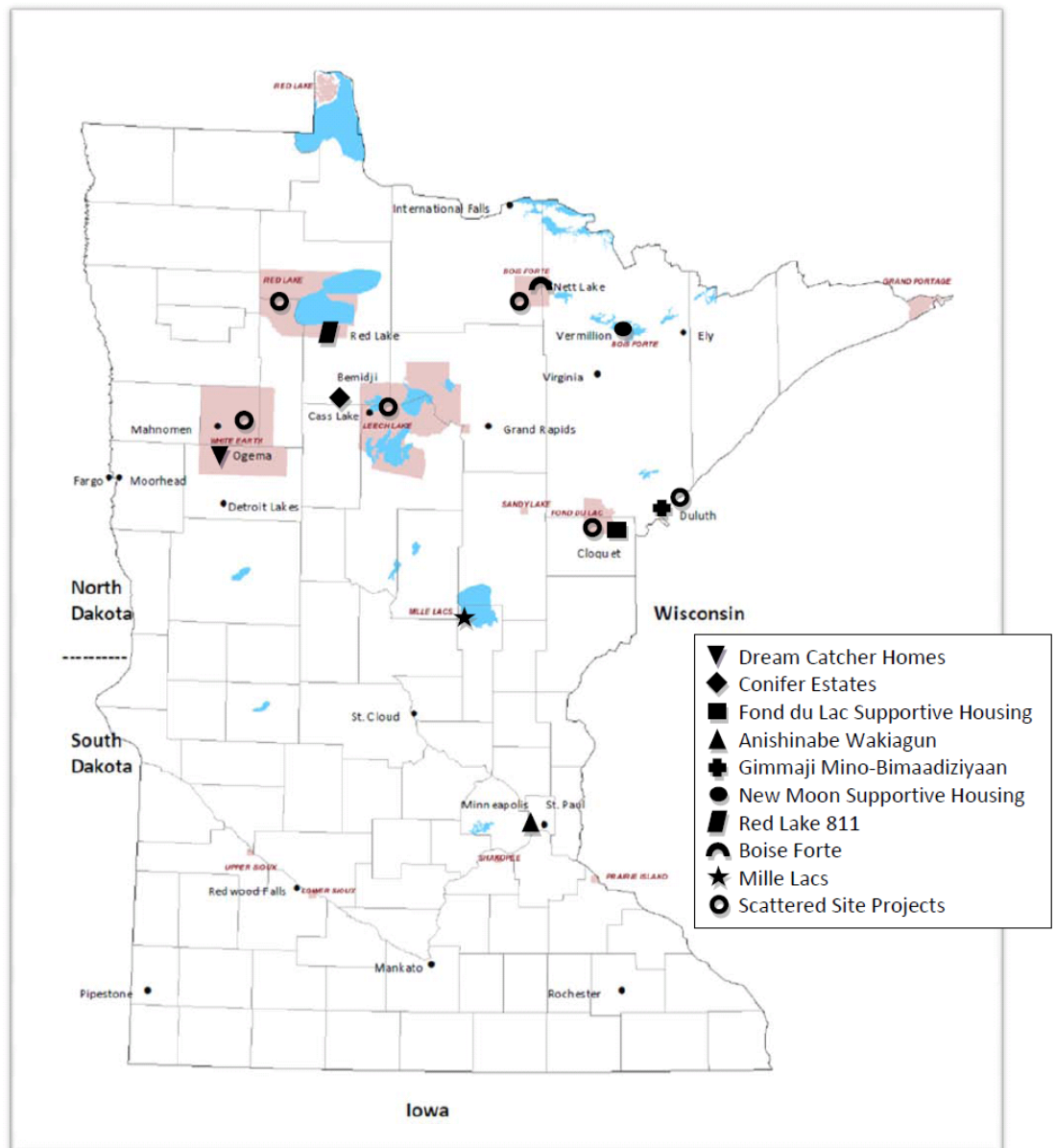
Anishinabe Wakiagun - Anishinabe Wakiagun demonstrates an approach to providing safe, affordable service-supported housing for homeless people with chronic alcohol addiction through a “harm reduction” PSH model. Anishinabe Wakiagun provides 40 units of PSH in a single building in Minneapolis.

The small but growing number of American Indian PSH projects has been met with an overwhelmingly positive response from American Indian tribes and groups across the country. The precedents set in Minnesota—namely, the successful integration of supportive services and housing, the blending of NAHASDA funds with mainstream housing capital, and the successful adaptation of models on both tribal lands and urban settings—have unleashed a tide of demand and interest on the part of tribal governments and Native American organizations nationally.

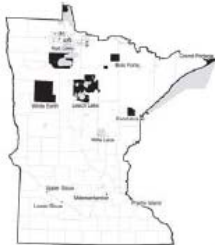
Attached, please find:

- 1) Map of Permanent Supportive Housing developments funded by Minnesota Housing
- 2) Timeline for American Indian Supportive Housing projects created by the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)

Minnesota American Indian Permanent Supportive Housing



American Indian Supportive Housing in Minnesota



The American Indian Supportive Housing Initiative

In 2005, the Corporation for Supportive Housing's Minnesota Program (CSH) partnered with tribes, Enterprise Community Partners, and American Indian nonprofit organizations to create the American Indian Supportive Housing Initiative (AISHI) as a means of helping tribes and Indian communities across the state address the issue of homelessness. This initiative resulted from a recognized need for increases in both the quantity and quality of housing for American Indians, both on and off the reservation, and the lack of adequate resources to get the work done. AISHI focuses its efforts on opening the doors of supportive housing for American Indians by offering technical assistance, training, and financial assistance to tribes and nonprofit organizations.