

Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless

Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
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August 4, 2021

Representative Ryan Winkler
Representative Anne Neu Brindley
Representative Cederick Frazier

Senator Karin Housley
Senator Mary Kiffmeyer
Senator Erin Murphy

Com. Robert Doty
Com. Steve Grove
Com. Roslyn Robertson

Re: Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless Recommendation of Frontline Worker Pay

Dear Frontline Worker Pay working group:

The Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless, on behalf of our 100 member organizations across Minnesota, would like to provide input on the distribution of the Frontline Worker Pay available in Minnesota for workers who provided lifesaving work during the Coronavirus Pandemic. We would like the Working Group to consider our shelter staff and supportive housing staff across the state as part of your final recommendations for enhanced pay for their tireless work in keeping those individuals experiencing homelessness and housing instability safe.

To date, less than 1,400 cases of COVID-19 have been traced to homeless shelters in Minnesota, this is due to shelter staff pivoting quickly and effectively in March of 2020 to ensure that there was adequate spacing and precautions in place to reduce the spread of this disease. As our shelter staff continue to keep these precautions in place across the state, they did so during a period of time when other workers got to stay home. Additionally, supportive housing staff worked to keep those people currently in housing stable to reduce the spread of the pandemic in congregate settings. If our shelter staff and supportive housing staff had not stepped up during this pandemic our unhoused population and those experiencing housing instability would have been even more susceptible to catching this deadly virus.

This working group is tasked to make recommendations to financially support workers who've had an increased risk of catching this virus due to the nature of their work. Much like our healthcare workers, our shelter staff and supportive housing staff had to remain in-person in congregate settings in order to provide these highly necessary services. Please consider providing our frontline shelter staff and supportive housing workers with an increased rate of pay for their increased risk of exposure doing their essential jobs.

If you have questions about the specific work our frontline shelter staff and supportive housing staff do across the state, including regularly interacting with members of the public and maintaining continuity of operations of this essential critical infrastructure, please reach out to Zack Eichten at zack@mnhomelesscoalition.org or 651-829-0888.

Sincerely,



Rhonda Otteson
Executive Director