

**Coronavirus Relief / Health Care Response / COVID-19 Minnesota Funds Request Form**

Please complete this form in accordance with the process instructions.

**Agency/Point of Contact:** Commissioner Harpstead and Cathy ten Broeke - DHS and MN Interagency Council

**Title of Request:** Homeless COVID Response - Winter Shelter Capacity Ramsey County

**Date:** 11/19/2020 **Request Amount:** \$ 2,400,000

**Expenditure Time Period:** 1/1/2021 to 6/30/2021

**Request Funding Source:**

- Coronavirus Relief Fund (if selected complete page 2)
- Health Care Response Fund
- COVID-19 Minnesota Fund

**Brief Summary of Request:** (Summary must be complete on this page with supporting information attached)

The number of people sleeping outside has risen over the last several years, and COVID presents a particularly dangerous confluence of crises for people staying outdoors this winter, given limited availability of public spaces due to COVID closures, the insufficient supply of shelter or affordable housing options, and the continuing risk of COVID-19 infection. Demand for shelter increases in winter. However, many State and Federal resources currently supporting COVID-safe spaces and shelter capacity will expire or be fully expended by the end of December. Accordingly, the COVID-19 Minnesota Fund is uniquely positioned to fill a critical gap and support new capacity throughout the winter.

The state, in partnership with local government, philanthropy, and community partners, has kept COVID cases low among this vulnerable population by using mitigation strategies in existing shelter and offering additional spaces for those most at risk of serious COVID complications. Maintaining low cases numbers in this population is vitally important. Based on the latest MDH data, one third of all COVID-positive people experiencing homelessness become hospitalized, a rate 5.5 times higher than the general population in Minnesota. In addition, on a per capita basis, six times more people experiencing homelessness end up needing ICU levels of care compared with the general population. Hospitalization rates have been even higher for people experiencing homelessness who are living outdoors, making access to shelter a critical strategy to mitigate hospitalization, preserve health system capacity, and avoid adverse health outcomes and death.

This proposal requests \$2.4 million to fund additional winter shelter in a COVID responsive model. (This investment complements a similar previous investment of COVID-19 Minnesota Funds for shelter operations in Hennepin County.) The project would maintain approximately 100 hotel-based shelter beds in Ramsey County from January through June and support Ramsey County's efforts to provide access to shelter and housing to protect people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.

Of this \$2.4 million request, an estimated \$1.3 million will be used to sustain access to hotel-based shelter capacity for 100 beds serving an estimated 200 people per month. An additional \$530,000 will be provided for food for people experiencing homelessness. Approximately \$570,000 will support staffing for shelter and a mobile benefits team designed to help connect people experiencing homelessness with the resources needed to end their homelessness. This investment leverages and complements significant new local investments in homeless response and prevention by Ramsey County.

**Jodi Harpstead** Digitally signed by Jodi Harpstead  
Date: 2020.11.24 08:39:45 -06'00'  
Department Head Signature

11/24/2020  
Date