



Office of Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan

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Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan Launch Winter Homeless Initiative to Bring Minnesotans without Shelter Inside

ST. PAUL, MN – Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan were joined by business, philanthropic, and community leaders at a Minneapolis shelter this morning to announce the launch of the Minnesota Winter Homeless Initiative. This call to action has already spurred \$4.82 million in investments from public, corporate, and non-profit entities. This effort is designed to immediately increase shelter capacity across the state for Minnesotans living outside this winter. On any given winter night, more than 1,600 Minnesotans sleep outside, including 300 children and youth. This figure has doubled statewide since 2015.

“Every Minnesotan deserves a safe, warm place to sleep at night,” Governor Walz said. **“Yet from Minneapolis to Mankato, too many Minnesotans are without shelter in the winter. That is why our Administration is partnering with the private sector, philanthropic partners, and Minnesotans across the state to launch the Minnesota Winter Homelessness Initiative. Together as One Minnesota, we will bring our neighbors in from the cold.”**

“This initiative is part of a larger strategy to develop more opportunities to connect people with long-term housing,” said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan. **“But right now, when temperatures are dropping to the single digits and people are trying to survive outside, we have to prioritize getting people somewhere safe and warm, period. Shelters save lives and shelters can play a critical role in helping people connect to long-term solutions.”**

Their call for leadership, creative ideas, and support led to the Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation stepping in to develop the Minnesota Homeless Fund. It has already leveraged \$4.82 million in new dollars to bring people inside this winter. As part of the Minnesota Winter

Homeless Initiative, the Administration asks all Minnesotans to reach out to local community providers to help them bring people inside through donations and volunteering. They are also calling on local governments to prioritize their housing and services for those most in need and look for creative ways to make underutilized spaces available for people to use as shelter this winter.

“Since the closing of the Hiawatha encampment a year ago, Minnesotans have been working together to understand what is needed to better serve our neighbors across the state,” said Cathy ten Broeke, Assistant Commissioner and Executive Director of the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness. **“As part of our larger plan to prevent and end homelessness in Minnesota, this initiative will bring new investments, awareness, and urgency to the need to bring people inside this winter and beyond.”**

In addition to contributing directly to providers who do this important work, corporate and philanthropic investors can contribute to the newly established Minnesota Homeless Fund set up at the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation (mnhomelessfund.org).

Standing with partners from around the state, Walz and Flanagan announced the initiative at the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center in Minneapolis, one of numerous providers that will quickly open up additional overnight space with targeted funding.

Some immediate impacts of investments from the Minnesota Homeless Fund are:

- Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center in Minneapolis can provide a safe space for 25 to 30 women overnight;
- Voice of East African Women in Ramsey County can accommodate 20 mothers and children overnight;
- Washington County churches can increase overnight shelter capacity to accommodate an additional 30 people;
- YouthLink in Hennepin County can extend its hours to open up a safe overnight resting space for 35 homeless youth;
- Simpson Housing Services in Minneapolis can add 15 shelter beds for men and women; and
- Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Area in Northern Minnesota can place 25 people in three rented homes and apartments.

Today's announcement comes on the 35th Annual Homeless Memorial March organized by Simpson Housing Services. The March recognizes the names and lives of people who died in the

past year while homeless, underscoring the immediate and critical need for shelter now for people living outside.

“The Metropolitan Council is proud to be the first public contributor to this important initiative,” said Molly Cummings, Metropolitan Council Interim Chair. **“Children, families and individuals need housing stability to be healthy and successful. When they suffer, we all suffer.”**

The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation is managing the pooled emergency fund, with oversight by an advisory committee made up of public and private sector representatives and individuals with lived experience of homelessness. The Fund initially aimed to raise \$5 million but has set its sights on twice that to meet the opportunities to bring more people inside from across the state.

“We are committed to getting the funds on the ground quickly and make a demonstrable difference for hundreds of Minnesotans this winter,” said Sue Haigh, consultant for the Minnesota Homeless Fund.

“As a company that has made Minnesota home for more than a century, we care deeply about this state and all Minnesotans,” said Jay Lund, chairman and CEO of Andersen Corporation. **“We thank Governor Walz, Lieutenant Governor Flanagan, and their team for making this issue a top priority. Andersen is committed to partnering with our private sector colleagues, the public sector, and nonprofit community to make sure more Minnesotans have shelter this winter. We hope others will be inspired to join Andersen and the other six companies that have stepped up to provide immediate support for the Minnesota Homeless Initiative.”**

About the Minnesota Homeless Fund

The Minnesota Homeless Fund, founded in December 2019, has already assembled \$4.82 million in resources from philanthropy, corporate donors, and public entities:

- \$1 million each from the Metropolitan Council, Schulze Family Foundation, and the Pohlad Family Foundation.
- \$700,000 from the Frey Foundation of Minnesota.
- \$600,000 from corporate contributions by Ecolab, Doran Companies, Securian, US Bank, Andersen Corporation, and Wells Fargo.

- \$320,000 in gifts from The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation, Bush Foundation, Northland Foundation, the Minneapolis Foundation, and the Blandin Foundation.
- \$200,000 from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) and the Red Lake Band of Chippewa.

For more information about the Minnesota Homeless Fund, visit mnhomelessfund.org.

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