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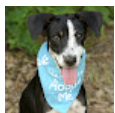
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Monday, December 13, 2021

Combatting Homelessness and Improving Lives in Minnesota: Partners for Affordable Housing



In our Giving Season blog series highlighting nonprofits across the U.S., today we introduce you to [Partners for Affordable Housing](#), an Encompass-rated nonprofit that has earned our "Give With Confidence" designation having an [99 out of 100 rating](#) on Charity Navigator with earned beacons of organizational effectiveness — Finance & Accountability, Impact & Results, Culture & Community, and Leadership & Adaptability.

Homelessness is significant everywhere, though in Minnesota, it's often a hidden phenomenon. Sometimes it looks like people sleeping in cars, ice houses, storage units, or other places unfit or unsafe for human habitation. Sometimes it looks like people doubling up with family members, or "couch-hopping" until their welcome runs out and they need to find other accommodations. It can be a cycle that is very difficult to break.

According to Maslow's hierarchy, physiological needs and safety must be met before people can self-actualize and flourish in their own lives. Adequate housing is critical for local jobs, strong economy, children's success in school and positive health outcomes.

Our nonprofit, Partners for Affordable Housing, is best known as the parent agency for the Greater Mankato Area's [three homeless shelters](#): the Theresa House and the Welcome Inn in Mankato; and Union Street Place in Saint Peter. In these shelters, we aim to provide guests with a clean place to stay, not just for the night, but for up to 90 days while they acknowledge and overcome barriers; and connect guests to resources

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for medical and behavioral health services, job search agencies, monthly budgeting, self-care techniques, food providers, transportation resources, childcare options, and more.

We also support guests with housing placement by helping gather information and assisting with rental applications; providing monetary help to cover application fees; and advocating on behalf of clients to secure housing.

Factors that often precede homelessness can vary person by person or household by household, and may include mental health issues, loss of relationship (through death, divorce, break-up), chemical dependency, loss of home in fire or natural disaster, job loss, injury or illness, or lack of reliable, affordable childcare.

These factors may also become barriers to future housing stability for guests arriving at one of Partners for Housing's three emergency homeless shelters.

According to the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, housing is considered affordable when it consumes 30% or less of a household's wages. Households paying more than 30% of their income are considered cost burdened, while those paying 50% or more of their wages on housing are considered severely cost burdened. According to a 2019 report by the Minnesota Housing Partnership, State of the State, 26% of Blue Earth County residents and 22% of Nicollet County residents are severely cost burdened.



In addition to the three shelters, we provide case management and financial assistance to once-homeless and/or at-risk individuals and families living in rental properties in a four-county region. Clients may remain in the [transitional housing program](#) for up to two years, during which time Partners for Affordable Housing pays the portion of their rent which

exceeds the 30% of income threshold, reducing the cost burden for those in the program.

Statewide, there are not enough affordable housing options for the number of people teetering on poverty. Due to COVID-19, there have been significant economic implications – lower wages or decreased hours worked, increasing costs for fuel, food, etc. This economic impact leaves vulnerable people faced with decisions about how to spend their income.

We believe it is a human right to have safe and stable housing. In order to make housing affordable for low-income households year-round, we offer 31 below-market rental units with fewer eligibility stipulations for tenants. We do not screen out applicants with previous evictions, but consider instead where they are in their housing journey. By making available these rental properties and policies, we aim to increase the likelihood that tenants can remain permanently housed and avoid becoming at-risk for homelessness in the future.



Homelessness is very complex, and we aren't able to accomplish our work alone. Partnerships with other agencies, state and local funding, and community



engagement through volunteerism and donations round out the safety net of support.

During each giving season, Partners for Affordable Housing receives more than 20% of its gifts for the year. It is a time when the organization reassesses programs offered, number of clients that can be served, as well as staffing projections. Donations made during December ensure fiscal confidence and program vitality throughout the upcoming year.

When supporting Partners for Affordable Housing, a highly rated nonprofit by Charity Navigator, donors can be assured that their contributions will be used in an ethical and fiscally responsible manner, and they can confidently apply their dollars to [impact homelessness](#) in the region.

Partners for Housing's mission is to guide individuals and families toward housing stability. Women and families seeking housing are encouraged to [fill out an application](#).

Authored by [Kirsten Becker](#), communications manager at Partners for Housing. In her role, she authors monthly opinion columns to a local news outlet, creates press releases and quarterly newsletters. She manages volunteers and donations, co-chairs the events committee, and manages the organization's website and social media accounts. <https://partnersforhousing.org/>

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at [8:00 AM](#)

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