

Hennepin County District Commissioners,

In response to state and federal announcements of a state of emergency due to the Corona Virus outbreak, schools and businesses in Minnesota are closing. Many members of our community are already losing wages due to layoffs, hours being cut, and challenges with child care. In light of this crisis, we are urging the county take action to keep community members safe and housed by providing additional homelessness prevention services.

We strongly suggest that Hennepin county release supplemental funding to EA/EGA to provide vital support to any individuals and families impacted by this crisis. These funds must be widely available and must not fall under the same strict eligibility requirements of EA/EGA, which limits access for those in need. Residents who have received EA or EGA in the past 12 months should be eligible for this assistance, as should undocumented residents of the county. Furthermore, in order to best protect residents, the county should remove any “affordability” requirements which may unfairly disadvantage those most impacted by loss of income.

As community leaders and service providers, we know that many people will continue to show up to work, despite displaying symptoms, unless they know that missing work will not jeopardize their housing. We know that with 1 in 10 Minnesotan living below the poverty line, losing even a day of wages or childcare can have serious consequences.

We are calling upon the county to allocate \$50 million dollars to a supplement EA / EGA funding for any household impacted loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We estimate households may need upwards of \$2000 a month to pay for housing. This \$50 million could support 25,000 households in Hennepin County.

**Mass displacement and evictions in Hennepin county will be disastrous both to individuals and to our public safety, as doubling up or staying in shelters could further spread this disease.** Hennepin County must be a leader, and state that nobody will become homeless as a result of this outbreak.

We know the need is great. We are here to support any increase in Emergency Assistance. This unprecedented crisis will impact many Minnesotas, and we call on Hennepin county to be a leader in responding in a bold and timely manner.

Signed,

**Suburban Hennepin Housing Coalition**

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Ben Whelan, House of Prayer Lutheran Church & Richfield Community Housing Team

Kerri Fischer, ICA Food Shelf & Minnetonka Community Housing Team

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