

# Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

# 2022



## Brandon Lawhead

**City/Town:** Austin

**Legislative District:** SD 23

**Party:** DFL

*Candidate responses in italics.*

1. In July 2021, a [national poll](#) found that 68% of the public believes that elected officials are not paying enough attention to the rising cost of housing and ensuring everyone can afford a place to live. **What do you believe is the role of government in ensuring everyone has a place to call home?**

*The role of government should not be to become a landlord. Rather, the role of government should to subsidize low interest loans to community engaged investors. This will help stimulate investment into affordable housing opportunities, while simultaneously developing a more robust economy.*

2. Nearly all counties in Minnesota (92%) are not able to provide sufficient shelter or temporary housing to those who are homeless. **What will you do to end homelessness?**

*We need homeless shelters*

3. Emergency rental assistance keeps people stably housed, as we saw with federal pandemic-related funding. Historically, nonpayment of rent is the most common reason landlords evict their tenants. During times of financial crisis, families without access to financial resources may be displaced, evicted, or even become homeless. **What will you do to prevent evictions?**

*Insure that there are entities able to work with landlords to provide rental assistance*

4. Minnesota's housing crisis disproportionately harms families of color, especially Black and Indigenous households. Minnesota is one of the worst states in the nation for racial disparities in homeownership. Additionally, 58 percent of Black renters are paying more than they can afford on housing costs. **What meaningful steps will you take to eliminate racial disparities in housing?**

*Lending is the most critical area for insuring homeownership. Specifically, helping in repairing credit scores so people can qualify for houses.*

5. There are approximately 170,000 renter households in the state that earn less than \$31,200 per year. But rental assistance is only available to one out of every four income-qualifying households. Even though more than 100,000 lowest income households need homes, the state only supports the production of 100 homes each year for these families. **What will you do to support the housing needs of those at the lowest income level in Minnesota?**

*Public-private partnerships in housing, where low interest loans to investors insure affordable housing*

6. Energy efficiency improvements in multifamily buildings and weatherizing single family homes improve indoor air quality, eliminate drafts, and protect residents from extreme cold and heat—delivering health benefits and lower health care costs. **What strategies do you support to improve housing conditions and reduce utility costs?**

*Vo-Tech training in the area of home repairs is an interesting concept that yields high quality workmanship, better housing conditions, and a greater source of carpentry and trade workers*

7. Minnesota's home values are increasing rapidly, constraining low- and middle-income families from achieving affordable homeownership, including more than 64,000 households of color. **What steps will you take to increase opportunities for renters to purchase homes, condos, or cooperative ownership models?**

*The FHA and VA Loans and first time homebuyer loans provided a wonderful opportunity for persons to become homeowners. Bringing a similar state program with perhaps more attention to credit repair would provide the most realistic change.*

8. Including the recommendations of the community when developing policies and programs is a best practice for effective and lasting solutions. **How will you include those most impacted by housing needs in developing and implementing housing solutions?**

*Meeting with landlords to provide workable solutions*