

# Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

# 2022



## Cheryl Youakim

**City/Town:** Hopkins

**Legislative District:** HD46B

**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?**

*To work with our counties and cities to find ways to support rehabilitating NOAH while keeping it affordable, finding ways to incentivize building of affordable housing by closing investment gap and the tax code, continue the work our House Committee on Housing and Subcommittee on Preventing Homelessness is doing.*

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?**

*Continue to work on supporting our cities and counties with policies and funding to creating new affordable and workforce housing units as well as rehabilitating the naturally occurring affordable housing that we do have. Make sure we have tenant rights that help them stay in their homes and focus on funding and expanding the wrap-around full-service community school model. It is hard for a child to learn when they don't know where they are going to sleep that night.*

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?**

*We need to continue to find ways to fund rental assistance as well as finding ways to make sure our landlords can keep their doors open. We also need to*

*continue to reform the eviction policies so that an eviction on your record does not mean a permanent mark on your record.*

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?**

*Some of the investments I have mentioned above will help close that gap. But, we also need to increase the minimum wage, support paid family leave, tackle the opportunity gap, prevent restrict housing policies, and more. Helping place people and families on a trajectory to build historical wealth and afford housing is part of the puzzle.*

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?**

*Increase investments in rental assistance and make sure that the programs are on solid systemic footing so they aren't as effected by political winds.*

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?**

*I recently passed a bill that allows cities to help multi-unit and business properties invest in energy improvement systems by allowing the owners to assess their properties to pay back for those systems over time. We also need to look at other incentives to help our multi-unit housing tackle energy efficiency improvements.*

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?**

*At the state level, we can look at our property tax structure to exclude more property tax on the front end and providing aids and credits on the back end that are linked to income level. We also need to work with our counties and cities to fund programs that target new homeowners.*

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?**

*It is so very important to have those experiencing the lack of affordable housing and those facing homelessness at the table to share their experiences and to figure out what holes we need to fill in our systems. We need all hands on deck to figure out affordable housing as there is no one solution that will solve this epidemic.*