

# Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

# 2022



## Jim Abeler

**City/Town:** Anoka

**Legislative District:** SD35

**Party:** R

*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?**

*It is a shared responsibility between the public and private sectors.*

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?**

*Only part of the problem is housing per se. The other elements include substance abuse, mental health issues, skills training, environmental factors and employment. These must all be addressed to be successful.*

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?**

*Evictions are a problem. The amount of resources the state/feds can provide is finite. Those resources must be used wisely and at the right points of time to not just prevent evictions but to build independent capacity for the person/family unit. These include addressing substance abuse, mental health issues, skills training and ultimately employment.*

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?**

*We have come a long way from a time when areas were red-lined. There should be no racial disparities, which will be accomplished by community efforts including the state/feds and private elements.*

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?**

*It seems impossible that we will build our way out of this by subsidizing state/federal sponsored projects. The monies are spent inefficiently for mediocre housing. Builders must be incentivized to build nice units at a modest cost and the money would create at least twice as many units. This would be a start.*

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?**

*It is all about partnership. Homeowners/landlords who want to improve utility efficiencies and the utility companies combined with state/federal resources which in many cases already exist.*

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?**

*This is important. Part of accomplishing this is to help low income families increase their income. Improved work skills, training and peer- and personal supports can help accomplish this.*

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?**

*The solution needs to be community by community based. The above-down approach of statewide policies simply don't work in some areas. Each local city or town has to work with the elected officials and state/federal/local housing advocates and programs to be successful.*

