

Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

2022



Judy Seeberger

City/Town: Lakeland

Legislative District: SD41

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?**

I believe government plays an essential role in ensuring everyone has a place to call home. At all levels, government should incentivize, invest in, and work with partners to ensure sufficient building and maintenance of housing options at all price levels - especially deeply affordable housing so that no one is priced out of our communities, and all can live and thrive with a roof over their heads.

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?**

I will be a strong partner in identifying state resources that can be pointed towards increasing housing options and building on existing shelter resources to expand available beds and units, while also bringing in needed support services like mental health and addiction services to ensure that folks are moving through our systems and on to full lives, not cycling through temporary housing situations again and again.

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?**

I would support a tenant's or renter's bill of rights statewide, to ensure that policies are not slanted against families and individuals struggling to get by and at risk of falling into homelessness. A permanent eviction moratorium is not

sustainable, but we can do better to ensure folks are protected and have an opportunity to get plugged into support services before they are displaced or become homeless.

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?**

Minnesota can do much more to create carve-outs and dedicated homeownership programs to eliminate racial disparities in housing. Our racial disparities in so many areas are not only tied together, but are some of the worst in the nation. We need to address disparities in housing, health outcomes, education, and more, hand in hand and holistically, not haphazardly.

My district also contains several large manufactured home parks, and I strongly support an opportunity-to-purchase law for those residents- especially as many of them are seeing dramatic and unwarranted increases in lot rent for homes they have lived in for years.

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?**

Protecting, building, and preserving low-income rental housing is one of the greatest housing needs for our state. I support utilizing and developing new tools to achieve that work, including housing infrastructure bonds, and leveraging existing resources to create more deeply affordable units.

I also strongly support Senator Dzierdzic's bill to create an emergency rental assistance program to help families and individuals stay in their homes.

I support state matching funds for local housing trust funds, and expanding state resources for rental assistance programs. Access to critically needed housing support shouldn't be left up to a lottery, or be first-come first-served.

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?**

A great way to address all of utility costs, climate change, and public health is to add to tree cover in low-income neighborhoods across the state. I also support incentives to improve insulation and working with relevant construction trades to create a state ventilation certification so that experts who understand air filtration are identifiable to ensure efforts to strengthen air quality are capable and knowledgeable.

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?**

I believe some current regulatory and liability issues have impacted developers' willingness to build new condos in the state. As a lawyer who practices general liability and civil litigation, I feel that I bring the needed experience to solve difficult policy challenges in this space and develop a system that protects residents and condo owners while ensuring developers and operators can feel confident in building new condos.

I also am intrigued to learn more about cooperative ownership models and how Minnesota can encourage those models to be a difference maker in the amount of affordable housing available.

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?**

I will include those most impacted by housing needs by governing in the way that I have campaigned- by being present, listening to my community, partnering with community leaders, and putting the people of Minnesota first. As I reach out to folks across my Senate District, I ask what is important to them and how I can work for them- and I will continue doing exactly that after my election to the Minnesota Senate.

