

Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

2022



Larry Kraft

City/Town: St. Louis Park

Legislative District: HD46A

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?**

Housing is a fundamental human right. Having a safe and healthy place to live is foundational to being able to contribute to, and thrive in, society. Government should be involved in ensuring the supply of quality affordable housing.

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 more homelessness support programs that send money and resources to the individuals who are experiencing homelessness to ensure that they can pay for basic housing needs. Rep. Aisha Gomez's homeless prevention aid seeks to do just that. We need to make that program permanent. In addition, we need to create more deeply affordable housing including multi-family housing and perhaps tiny homes.

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 should be looking to fund a program like Bring It Home, which would get at the root cause of the issue, the inability of those in financial need to pay their rent. I would also support a statewide eviction notice period (7-14 days seems to be reasonable), as we put in place in St. Louis Park while I was on City Council.

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?**

Bring It Home would address the issue of renters paying more than they can afford by ensuring no family would pay more than 30% of their income on rent. We also need to address the huge racial disparity in home ownership. In St. Louis Park we created a forgivable loan program targeted towards first generation home buyers. I'd love to see the state have a similar type program or at least provide matching funds for these types of programs in cities.

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?**

Again, Bring It Home could be one part of addressing this issue, by providing private market vouchers to these renter households to insure they spend a maximum of 30% of their income on housing. Longer term, and especially if we implement Bring It Home, we need to address the housing supply issue, by removing financing barriers and encouraging more housing density.

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'm very excited about the energy efficiency and weatherization investments built into the Inflation Reduction Act. We, as a state, need to be ready to make full use of the money available, as well as adding our own. We should target these investments first at naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), because these buildings tend to be older and less energy efficient. Additionally, residents of NOAH often face a high energy burden in the amount of their income consumed by the cost of energy.

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?**

In St. Louis Park we created a forgivable loan program targeted towards first generation home buyers (those who have never owned a home and whose

parents also did not own a home). This program provides up to \$75,000 that is forgiven 5% per year over 20 years. I'd love to see the state have a similar type program or at least provide matching funds for these types of programs in cities.

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'll seek out those most impacted and groups that represent them and listen. It's critical to have those experiencing the lack of affordable housing and homelessness at the table to make sure that policies and solutions adopted actually meet real needs.