

# Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

# 2022



## Liz Olson

**City/Town:** Duluth

**Legislative District:** HD 8A

**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 human right. All levels of Government need to ensure everyone has a safe place to call home. This means prioritizing funding and policy that ensures safe, affordable housing for everyone.*

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 to invest in all ends of the housing continuum, including emergency shelter and transitional housing. We also need to work creatively with new ideas to ensure everyone is housed. We also need to ensure other factors are addressed related to poverty-- increased minimum wage, benefits like ESST and PFML, etc.*

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?**

*Yes, I have supported such efforts in the past and will continue to do so*

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 need to ensure we are investing in BIPOC communities in current housing needs. In addition we need to rectify the systems of inequality that created gaps in wealth and well-being such as the history of red-lining in Duluth. We need to intentionally invest in ensuring we can close the racial wealth gap that was intentionally created by past policies and practices. This means investment in homeownership for BIPOC communities, such as downpayment assistance for first time home buyers.*

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 rental assistance and also create ways to make more 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?**

*I support investing in the energy efficiency improvements you listed above, prioritizing older housing and low income families.*

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?**

*We need to intentionally invest in ensuring we can close the racial wealth gap that was intentionally created by past policies and practices. This means investment in homeownership for BIPOC communities, such as downpayment assistance for first time home buyers.*

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?**

*Actively seeking out voices of those impacted in my community from formation of priorities to engaging in advocacy at the capitol and regular contact with organizations that prioritize these issues at the capitol*

