

# Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

# 2022



## Steve Elkins

**City/Town:** Edina

**Legislative District:** HD50B

**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 am actively working to eliminate regulatory barriers to the construction of more affordable housing. I also support state funding to supplement the federal Housing Choice Voucher program (aka Bring it Home, MN) and State bonding funding to build additional affordable housing units as well as temporary shelter units.*

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 build many more new housing units of all kinds than the market is currently producing. I support providing state funding for additional shelter units and low income units as part of the overall solution.*

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 was a strong supporter of emergency rental assistance during the pandemic and I remain a strong supporter of expansion of the Housing Choice voucher program to provide ongoing rent subsidies for low income households.*

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?**

*My single most important legislative initiative is my Legalizing Affordable Housing Act HF3256 which would prohibit the exclusionary zoning practices that sustain segregated living patterns in Twin Cities suburbs.*

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?**

*I think that the expansion of the Housing Choice Voucher program would be the most effective means of putting low income families into housing they can afford. It is extremely expensive to subsidize the construction of new housing affordable to households at the lowest income levels.*

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 have been a strong defender of the State's energy efficiency building codes and will support the next round of code improvements which will be coming out over the next year or two.*

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?**

*Many of the provisions of my Legalizing Affordable Housing Act HF3256 are specifically targeted at fostering the construction of "missing middle" housing such as small single family homes, duplexes, town-homes and other relatively more affordable housing types for new 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?**

*By engaging with community groups convened by organizations such as MHP, the Alliance and others.*

