

## 2019 Minnesota Legislative Successes

People experiencing homelessness, advocates, people of faith, and organizations worked together to secure \$78 million in new investments for emergency shelter, rental assistance, and preservation and new production. (MICAH worked with Street Voices of Change, Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, Welfare Rights Coalition, APAC, Second Chance Coalition, Restore the Vote, Homes for All, JRLC, and NAMI).

### ***HOMES for All Agenda:***

#### ***Passed***

- \$60 million in Housing Infrastructure Bonds to build and preserve affordable housing.
- \$5 million increase in one-time funding to the Economic Development & Housing Challenge Program, a key funding source to develop affordable multifamily and single-family homes.
- \$10 million/biennium increase in ongoing funding to MHFA
  - \$3.5 million/ biennium Homework Starts With Home
  - \$3.5 million/biennium increase to Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program(FHPAP)
  - \$2 million/biennium to Manufactured Home Grants
  - \$500,000/biennium to Workforce Homeownership Program
  - \$500,000/biennium increase to Bridges
- \$3 million one-time funding to Emergency Services Program (Department of Health & Human Services)
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#### ***Did not pass***

- General Obligation (GO) Bonds. GO Bonds finance the rehabilitation of publicly-owned housing.
- Local Housing Trust Fund state match. While the match was included in the Governor's budget, other programs were ultimately prioritized in the final budget.
- Housing initiatives in the tax bill, including the affordable #HousingTaxCredit. Between efforts to conform to federal tax changes and disputes over increasing the gas tax and repealing the sunset on the provider tax, there wasn't enough to fund a new investment in housing.
- Lead Safe Homes- \$2 million program to address lead paint poisoning issues in rental housing.

The **Minnesota Legislature** passed proposals backed by **All Parks Alliance for Change (APAC)**, and endorsed by the **Homes for All MN** coalition, to close loopholes in the state **Right of First Refusal** law. Flaws in the existing law doomed a 2017 attempt by residents of the **Lowry Grove** manufactured (mobile) home park to buy their community and prevent it from being closed by a developer. A newly strengthened and streamlined process passed as part of the **Omnibus Agriculture Department, Rural Development, and Housing Finance Bill**.

The **Minnesota Legislature** also passed proposals backed by **APAC** to strengthen the state's **Manufactured Home Relocation Trust Fund**, which nearly exhausted its funds in 2017 as the result of two expensive park closures. When parks close, home owners receive reasonable compensation to either move their homes or, if it cannot be moved, replace their home through a buy-out. The program is funded an annual \$15 fee paid by the residents and a one-time per home payment made by the park owner when they close their community (ranging from \$3,250 to \$6,000). The changes adopted as part of the **Omnibus Housing Finance Bill** increase the fund balance cap from \$1 million to \$2 million, allow **Minnesota Housing** to advance funds when needed, improve the collection system for the \$15 fee, and increase oversight and reporting.

### **Additional Legislative Updates (Health and Human Services)**

- Beginning in February 2020, MFIP families will receive an additional \$100/month - the first increase in 33 years
- Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program. \$375,000 for FY2020, and another \$375,000 appropriated in FY2021 for the Prevention Program.
- The provider tax used to fund health care for low income Minnesotans will remain in effect, with a reduction from 2% to 1.8%.
- Families experiencing homelessness will now be eligible for childcare assistance for up to three months as they look for employment and housing. Applications for child care assistance for these families will now be expedited, with an eligibility decision in 5 days.
- The time limit on use of the portability pool for families using the child care program is removed. Currently, if a family moves to a county with a waiting list, child care assistance can be terminated after 6 months.
- The Working Family Credit for low- and moderate-income families was expanded.
- Over the next two years, \$450,000 will be available to nonprofits (for example, synagogues and mosques) for security measures to protect from terrorism.

There was no action on suspending driver's licenses for failure to pay traffic fines or allowing courts to waive, reduce or substitute community services for traffic fines. Other unsuccessful efforts include limits on payday lending, driver's licenses for immigrants, and gun violence prevention.

Thanks to your calls, letters and emails, **we made substantial gains this session!**

## **NAMI**

### **Health and Human Services**

- Kept the Provider Tax with a slight decrease to 1.8%
- Funding to sustain Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)
- Funding for Intensive Children's Mental Health Treatment and 150 new Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTFs) beds
- NAMI Policy language to better enforce mental health parity
- Funding increase for school-linked mental health services - \$1.21M next two years and \$9.6M the following biennium along with expansion of who can apply for grants, what grant funding can be used for and an analysis of the program going forward
- Funding for youth-shelter linked mental health treatment - \$250,000 a year
- Funding for the child welfare training academy
- Making it easier to enroll in TEFRA through MNSure
- Reducing TEFRA fees
- Funding for Safe Harbour for sexually exploited youth
- Major increase in funding for suicide prevention - \$5.6M the first biennium and \$7.46M the second biennium
- Increasing MFIP by \$100 a month
- Decrease the spenddown under MA for people with disabilities in 2022 so it's 100% of the poverty guidelines instead of 81%
- Increasing timely access to substance use disorder treatment
- Increasing funding for FASD grants
- Additional funding for mobile mental health crisis services - \$2.5 next two years and \$9.793 the following biennium
- Funding for the specialized community supervision project
- Increase bed capacity in state operated services
- Funding for the competency restoration task force
- Funding to address county disputes with discharges from state operated services and requiring a report on the number of days someone spends in a state operated program when they don't need that level of care
- Expanding Medical Assistance to all children in foster care
- Funding for the tobacco quitline
- Addresses the issue of travel time for mental health professionals
- Incorporating changes to behavioral health homes
- Allowing jails to share names of people who screened positive on a mental health screen to county social services
- Requiring plans to cover PANDAS
- Strengthening oversight of network adequacy waivers building on language passed several years ago by NAMI to require plans to demonstrate what actions they are taking to ensure network adequacy
- Allows for prescriptions to be refilled in an emergency situation for chronic conditions (could help with mental health medications)
- Establishing Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month

This 649 page bill contains so much of what we all advocated for this session. It doesn't contain everything - such as a ban on conversion therapy, some supportive housing funding, and other items, but all in all it's a good bill for the mental health community.

## Education

- Major funding increase for special education.
- NAMI Policy language to provide mental health curriculum for school health classes.
- Funding to partially cover a suicide prevention training for teachers and other school personnel
- Requiring screening for dyslexia
- Allowing for an IEP meeting on a specific item that is disputed instead of a conciliation conference

## Public Safety

- NAMI Policy language to reform the use of solitary confinement. Read an article about it [here](#).
- Funding to restart the Ombudsperson for Corrections
- Funding to hire 67 new correctional officers in the coming biennium and 78 officers in the following biennium
- Salary increase for public defenders and funding for more attorneys and staff.
- Including \$1M courts need to complete additional psychological exams for people who may not be competent to stand trial
- Funding for treatment courts
- Funding for police training
- Funding for JDAI

## Housing/Employment

- Funding increase for the Bridges Housing Voucher for adults with a serious mental illness.
- One-time funding for Individual Placements and Supports (IPS), an employment program for adults with a serious and persistent mental illness.
- One-time funding increase for Emergency Homeless Shelters.

## Higher Education

- Funding for mental health professionals to co-locate at community and technical colleges to provide mental health treatment to students.

## Agriculture

- Funding for farmer's mental health

As always, there remains a great deal of work to be done, but we should be proud of the our advocacy efforts this session. With a limited budget target, we were still able to fund major mental health priorities and advance key NAMI policy priorities like mental health parity and solitary confinement reform. This could not have happened without you - your calls, emails and letters MADE A DIFFERENCE! Thank you! And now be sure to thank your representative and senator!

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