

MN 2021 Legislative Session Updates

Housing and Homeless Services

The Governor called the Legislature into a special session on June 14, 2021 to complete the work of passing a biennial budget. We are pleased to share that the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, the Health and Human Services, Housing, and Higher Education omnibus bills, enacting important investments to prevent and end homelessness. Funding highlights include (funding amounts per biennium, except where noted):

- \$12 million for the Emergency Services program.
- \$2 million for emergency shelter to increase capacity and improve conditions.
- \$18 million for the Community Living Infrastructure program, also expanding activities to include direct support for individuals with housing deposits, utility payments, costs related to expungement, etc.
- \$4 million for Housing Stabilization Services to support staffing and expanded activities, including helping with transition costs associated with moving to a community setting that are not covered by other sources, including rent deposits, utilities setup costs, essential furnishings and supplies, etc.
- \$50 per month increase to the Housing Support Room and Board Rate for individuals in certain community settings (effective July 2022).
- \$431,000 for additional staffing for the Department of Corrections and Department of Human Services Joint Initiative to help people re-entering the community after a release from a Minnesota Correctional facility.
- \$100 million for Housing Infrastructure Bonds.
- \$200,000 to support the Task Force on Shelter.
- \$538,000 for expansion of the Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students program.

The budget also includes base funding for several programs that are critical to preventing and ending homelessness including Family Homeless Prevention and state rental assistance programs.

As Commissioner Ho discussed during last week's provider webinar, the Housing omnibus bill includes an agreement on the "off-ramp" to the eviction moratorium.

Additionally, the Health and Human Services omnibus bill includes a provision extending the Housing Support temporary absence day policy for those who are away due to admission at a residential behavioral health facility, inpatient hospital or nursing facility. The limit on payments for absence days remains 18 calendar days per incident, not exceeding 60 days in a calendar year for other circumstances.

(Thank you to the MN Interagency Council for providing this information)

The \$125.6 million omnibus housing finance and policy bill contains just \$10 million in new General Fund spending, but it also contains provisions that address short- and long-term needs.

New General Fund spending includes \$3.25 million for workforce homeownership program, \$2.8 million for the housing challenge program, \$1.75 million for manufactured home park infrastructure grants, \$1 million into the home ownership assistance fund and \$1 million to establish a local housing trust fund.

View the spreadsheet:

<https://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/docs/FofMZUcKQEKIZ0M1Lqo3xA.pdf>

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

MFIP is a program that supports Minnesota's poorest children and families.

Many of these low-wage parents work in retail and hospitality and have been hit hard by the pandemic. For at least 15 years advocates have tried to get a COLA for these families, guaranteeing the benefit doesn't lose value each year.

Changes: The final bill includes a one-time \$475 emergency cash payment to families accessing MFIP and an ongoing, annual cost of living adjustment to the cash grant. We are incredibly thankful that legislators showed a strong commitment to these families.

(Thank you to JRLC for providing this information)

Second Chance Coalition successes

View Second Chance Coalition Legislative Updates & Key Wins here:

https://api.neonemails.com/emails/content/76l2T9a6BTzSSP8_4yReYoaNw1lljTkNZ24G4qPsDY=

APAC - All Parks Alliance for Change Update:

During the 2021 Legislative Session, we supported several other proposals related to manufactured housing that finally passed during the special session.

They were included in the Omnibus Housing Bill ([House File 4](#)), specifically:

Manufactured Home Park Infrastructure Grants – In 2017, the state established a grant program to deal with serious health and safety problems, and, in 2019, provided \$2 million in funding for 2020-2021. Funding was increased to \$3.75 million for 2022-2023.

Manufactured Home Park Purchase Funds – The state approved using up to \$15 million in Housing Infrastructure Bond (HIB) funds that residents and nonprofits can now use for the purchase of park communities.

Manufactured Home Rehabilitation Loans – The state has a rehab loan program for owner-occupied homes that includes manufactured homes. The conference committee is debating an increase in the size of loans from \$27,000 to \$37,500.

Manufactured Home Replacement Assistance – Under this proposal, funds for the rehab loan program can also be used to replace a home by allowing the funds to be used for down-payment assistance and closing costs.

**MICAH's Lead Safe Homes Bill was in the omnibus bill;
but it did not pass in the final bill.**

Minnesota received a significant amount of Federal Funds in the American Rescue Plan (ARP) (which MICAH advocated for) to address lead paint hazards.

MICAH will work with Legislators and State agencies to ensure the goals of Lead Safe Homes program are implemented in the use of these new federal resource.