Overview of the Foundation

The Pohlad Family Foundation works to improve the quality of life and opportunities for those most in need in the Twin Cities region. We focus our grantmaking on housing stability with the goal of preventing and ending homelessness for families and youth in the Twin Cities.

To achieve that, we organize our program work around two core priorities: 1) prevention – catching people before they fall into homelessness; and 2) housing affordability – moving people already experiencing homelessness into safe, stable housing.

Additionally, we advance program priorities by addressing larger systemic change, creating awareness, and galvanizing support. Homelessness is a significant issue, it can be solved, but we can’t do it alone.

In 2018, we committed $8 million over two years to organizations advancing prevention work. This spring we are committing $7 million over two years to support housing affordability efforts. We are accepting Letters of Interest through May 17, 2019. Additional information can be found on our website.

The purpose of our Housing Affordability Program is to help families and youth move out of homelessness and into housing that is stable and affordable.

Please review this overview before applying for our Housing Affordability Program. You will find information about how we think about this issue and what we are looking for in applications.

Importance of Housing Affordability to the Foundation’s mission

The Housing Affordability Program aims to help families and youth move out of homelessness and into safe, stable housing.

Our approach to this work is informed by many community experts and individuals experiencing homelessness. We recognize that:

- Basic, dignified housing is a human right.
- Housing is fundamental to quality of life.
- Institutional racism and bias affect who disproportionately experiences homelessness in our community.
- Prosperous regional economies benefit many and create demand that can outpace supply, limiting affordable housing options for those most vulnerable.

“The home is the wellspring of personhood. It is where identity takes root and blossoms... When we try to understand ourselves, we often begin by considering the kind of home in which we were raised.”

Matthew Desmond
Impact we want to have through the Housing Affordability Program

We will focus our grants on housing opportunities in the Twin Cities 7-county metropolitan area to affect:

1. The number of families and youth experiencing homelessness, increasingly making homelessness “rare.” Nearly 3,800 households served by the homeless response system were families or an unaccompanied youth.

2. The average length of time families and youth experience homelessness, making homelessness episodes increasingly “brief.”

3. The disparities in who experiences homelessness, including Black and Native Americans and LGBTQ Youth. Where the Twin Cities general population is majority white, our homeless population is majority people of color.
We will collaborate with others and track our collective progress through community indicators used by the broader field, including Point in Time counts and data increasingly available through Minnesota’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). We recognize the limitations of data and its ability to capture the full extent of need and complexity. We will seek to supplement this information through qualitative input that reflects community context. We will be accountable to program-level performance that aligns with community indicators, tracking relevant information on the impact our grants are having (see grant reporting requirements below).

**Our role to increase housing opportunities for families and youth in the Twin Cities region**

We view our role in this work to be an investor and advocate. We are not content experts but will use our position and privilege to galvanize public support and drive systems change.

Through our Housing Affordability Program, we will:

- Invest $7 million over two years (2019 and 2020) to fund services and strategies that increase housing opportunities for families and youth experiencing homelessness. Grants will range from $25,000 – $500,000 annually, up to a two-year commitment, supporting programs and capital projects throughout the Twin Cities 7-County metropolitan region.
- Support both established and promising practices. We are interested in helping to scale programs that work, while trying new approaches that show promise in improving effectiveness, efficiency and equity.
- Partner with grantees to raise up what is working, while confronting broader conditions that limit our shared success.

**Qualities for a competitive proposal**

The following reflects some of what we are learning but is not an exhaustive list:

- **Focus on a housing first approach is crucial**, demonstrating a shared belief that homelessness is first and foremost a housing crisis, that all people experiencing homelessness can achieve housing stability and that people experiencing homelessness – like all people – need the safety and stability of a home to best address challenges and pursue opportunities.
- **Programs and services must have equity at their core** to address the disparities that exist. This includes but is not limited to culturally responsive services, organizational staff and leadership that reflect the community served, and program decisions informed by those closest to the issue.
People with lived experience of homelessness are experts in identifying and addressing community solutions to housing stability. Engaging those with lived experience in forming, informing and improving programs and services is paramount to equity and lasting change.

A person-centered approach that maximizes participant choice and self-determination, focuses on strengths and aspirations, and provides holistic, individualized supports to promote long-term stability.

Coordination and collaboration with the broader homelessness response system, while not perpetuating gaps, is important to demonstrate clear understanding of existing resources, strengths and limitations of mainstream services and expertise.

Specific areas of interest

Our areas of interest reflect the intersection of what we’re hearing from the community and the Foundation’s priorities. These include:

- Direct, flexible financial assistance for families and youth currently experiencing homelessness (e.g., rent subsidies, damage deposits, gap financial assistance).
- Capital support to increase the number of affordable housing units for families and young people moving out of homelessness.
- Landlord engagement to increase the number of affordable housing units.
- Outreach and opportunities designated to families and youth disproportionately affected by homelessness (African Americans, Native Americans and LGBTQ youth).
- Embedded support services that help families and youth access and retain housing.
- Families or youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- Pregnant and parenting young adults.
- Youth and families experiencing domestic violence.

Results and grant reporting

We are accountable to community and our board to drive measurable results. As such, we require grantees to capture basic information about how families and youth are better off as a result of their services. At a minimum, we will require that our Housing Affordability Program grantees track and report the following program-level measures:

- Number of families and youth who are served.
- Number of families and youth who exit homelessness into permanent, stable housing.
- 6- and 12-month housing stability.
- Demographic information on households served AND households successfully housed.
Efforts we will not fund through the Housing Affordability Program

The Housing Affordability Program aims to increase housing opportunities for families and youth who are currently experiencing homelessness. Efforts that do not clearly demonstrate direct impact on expanding such opportunities will not be considered. We also will not consider:

- Stand-alone supports that are a necessary part of housing stability but do not directly help in accessing housing. However, organizations may embed these services within applications that clearly expand specific housing opportunities for families and youth.
- Affordable housing development that is not designated for families and youth experiencing homelessness or who are not extremely low-income (30% area median income or less).
- Programs outside of the Twin Cities’ 7-county metro area.
- Programs that do not primarily serve families and youth.
- Programs that do not reflect the disproportionate impact on people of color and LGBTQ youth as relevant to demographics of that specific community.

Key research guiding our focus on Housing Affordability

Our research included a number of community conversations with youth and family advocates, outreach workers, program managers and directors, Executive Directors, and people with lived experience. Your insights and passion have informed and inspired our work. You are the true experts. Thank you – we hope you see your feedback in this document and our grant strategy.

In addition to community conversations, the following research has informed our Housing Affordability Program:


