

The MHP Bulletin

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- [News](#)
 - [Minnesota Housing Board Report](#)
- [Resources](#)
 - [Data & Reports](#)
 - [Funding](#)
 - [Training](#)
- [From the Home Front](#)
 - [MHP Commits to \\$376,000 Investment in Economic Development in Rural Minnesota](#)
 - [MHP Hosts Affordable Housing Policy Showcase](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Upcoming Deadlines](#)

In addition to **The Bulletin**, MHP also publishes **The Capitol Update**, a newsletter that follows the ins and outs of state and federal housing policy and legislation that affect Minnesota. Click [here](#) to sign up for the **Update**.

News

January Minnesota Housing Board Report

At its January meeting, the Minnesota Housing board took action to preserve the state's affordable housing supply in unconventional ways. A number of grants were awarded to preserve the state's public housing and, for the first time, the agency's subsidized loan program (LMIR) was used to refinance a manufactured home park.

Twenty four public housing agencies across Minnesota will share \$5 million in agency grants to pay for capital or operating costs. This investment was made possible by a \$2.5 million appropriation in the 2007 legislative session with a one-for-one match from agency reserves. The grants ranged in size from \$500,000 to \$18,500, with exterior improvements (roofs, windows, and siding) being the most common use of funding.

Staff underscored that the state's one-time public housing commitment is being made with the "hope and expectation" that the federal government will eventually adequately fund public housing. Minnesota's public housing is home to 21,000 low-income households, more than half of whom have annual incomes less than \$10,000. Supporting public housing residents is a significant concern for the agency and warrants the investment, staff said.

(As a side note, I addressed the board on this point. I said that while the state's one-time investment was valued, it still only assists less than ten percent of Minnesota's public housing. As much as we hope and advocate for increased federal funding, this problem will not go away soon and the agency should strongly consider opening up to public housing the PARIF program, which was established to preserve federally assisted housing. *C.H.*)

The manufactured housing funding recipient is Sunrise Villa, a 47-lot cooperative community in Cannon Falls formed in 2004 with the help of Northcountry Cooperative Development Fund. Sunrise received a commitment of \$1.1 million in amortizing and deferred financing, through the LMIR program, to pay off existing short term debt and add \$100,000 to the cooperative's capital reserves. Staff pointed out that manufactured housing is an important piece of the state's housing stock—100,000 Minnesotans, mostly low-income, live in manufactured housing.

In other business, the board adopted a timetable for awarding the 2009 federal tax credits. Staff said June 17, 2008 is the application deadline for the \$10 million in credits which will yield about 1,300 affordable rental units. It also noted that Jack Jackson, the agency's market expert, retired. To ensure that the agency continues to direct its investments to areas with the greatest need, Minnesota Housing will establish a process of certifying market consultants. Any application for tax credits must include a market analysis prepared by one of these certified consultants. There will be a February 28 public hearing on the agency's proposed changes to the tax credit program.

Staff announced that the agency recently received a strong endorsement from Standard and Poor's. In its 2008 assessment of Minnesota Housing, S&P wrote that the agency's loan portfolio recently experienced "dramatic growth." The strong financial performance of the agency, "extremely capable and proactive management," and ongoing state support poised the agency to receive a AAA credit rating. Connecticut is the only other state housing finance agency to receive AAA status. The few negatives reported by S&P include the general risk currently associated with mortgage lending and the weakening of the agency's Section 8 portfolio due to HUD rent freezes.

Finally, staff announced that the agency's annual affordable housing awards luncheon this year will be held February 29, with Congressman Jim Ramstad speaking. Click [here](#) for more information. —*Chip Halbach*

Resources

Data & Reports

MHP Releases Updated Affordable Housing Trends

Minnesota Housing Partnership recently updated their [affordable housing trend charts](#) on its [Web site](#). The trend charts gauge Minnesota's progress towards achieving homes for all. The charts illustrate changes over time with regards to homelessness, rental and ownership affordability, and housing costs relative to employment for Minnesota, Duluth, Rochester, Saint Cloud, and the Twin Cities Metro area.

MinnPost's Blog of the Day from 1-28-08: This Web page features Realtor Aaron Dickinson's [chart showing the disparities in falling home prices in Minneapolis neighborhoods](#). [from MinnPost]

Funding

Grants Offered For High Energy Cost Communities

Nonprofits, for-profits, state and local governments, and tribes can apply by March 28 for competitive grants to improve energy generation, transmission, or distribution facilities for communities with high residential home energy costs. See *Federal Register*, 1/28/08, pp. 4778-90 or <http://www.usda.gov/rus/electric>. Contact Karen Larsen, RD, 202-720-9545, energy.grants@wdc.usda.gov. [from HAC News]

Training

New Resources Offered To Rural Homelessness Organizations

A new Rural Homelessness Capacity Building program launched this month will support the work of faith-based and community-based organizations serving homeless populations in rural America. RHCBC is funded by a Department of Health and Human Services Compassion Capital Fund grant. The Housing Assistance Council is operating it with help from the National Alliance to End Homelessness. For more information about the program, visit [The Rural Homelessness Capacity Building Project Web site](#), or contact RHCBC staff at 1-877-842-RHCBC. [from HAC News]

From the Home Front

MHP Commits to \$376,000 Investment in Economic Development in Rural Minnesota

The USDA recently awarded the Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP) \$188,000 to support local economic development organizations create affordable housing in rural Minnesota. MHP is one of only 38 organizations from across the country to receive a Rural Community Development Initiative Program (RCDI) grant in this round of funding.

MHP is matching the USDA grant dollar-for-dollar with funds provided by the McKnight Foundation. Together, the funds totaling \$376,000 will assist five organizations in Northeast, West Central, and Southeast Minnesota to create and preserve affordable homes. These areas were targeted to reflect communities facing significant economic growth over the next five years, but lacking the affordable housing development capacity necessary to address the associated housing demand.

MHP Hosts Affordable Housing Policy Showcase

On January 31, over 100 housing advocates, policy makers, and other interested parties attended MHP's Affordable Housing Policy Showcase at CommonBond's Skyline Tower in St. Paul. At the event, which was sponsored by Duluth and Twin Cities LISC, Sen. Tarryl Clark, Rep. Lyndon Carlson and housing leaders covered the state's legislative forecast for 2008 and policies addressing current housing concerns and other priorities. In addition, Minnesota Housing Partnership released its new Web resource, "[Trends in Housing Affordability](#)," a series of charts detailing the rise and fall in affordability of Minnesota's housing stock. Click [here](#) to download the event handouts.

The slowing economy proved to be the issue du jour as almost all the speakers said that competition for the state's resources is going to be fierce this year—some even predicted the need to protect existing housing money, as cuts are made across state agencies to eliminate the deficit. The newsletter, [MHP Capitol Update](#) will follow all 2008 legislative housing policies as they develop. Click [here](#) to subscribe.

Calendar

January 16 to March 4

Building Dreams.

Learn how Aeon (formerly Central Community Housing Trust, or CCHT) is responding to the affordable housing shortage in the Twin Cities. Join them for a 1-hour Building Dreams presentation. Space is limited, please register online at: <http://www.aeonhomes.org/bd> or call Jenny Johnson at 612-341-3148 x237.

St. Paul:

- February 21, 2008 at 4:30 pm
- March 4, 2008 at 7:30 am

February 8

Housing Models and Approaches: Making the Right Match, CSH, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., St. Paul and by video conference. Participants will learn about different housing models and approaches including residential treatment, scattered and single site supportive housing, harm reduction, and sober housing. In addition, the training will provide information on the roles and responsibilities of property managers, landlords, and service providers. More information to follow.

February 15

Search for Shelter Celebration, 5:00PM - 8:00PM, HGA Gallery, Rapson Hall, 89 Church Street SE, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. This event kicks off the AIA's (American Institute of Architects) [21st Annual Search for Shelter Design Charrette](#). Speakers include Thomas DeAngelo, AIA MN President, Katie Swenson from the Rose Fellowship Foundation and Warren Hanson from the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund. In addition, Katie and Warren will present two [Rose Fellowship Opportunities for Architectural Designers](#). Complimentary food and beverages provided.

February 21

Heading Home Hennepin: A public forum on homelessness, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Temple Israel, 2324 Emerson Avenue South, Minneapolis. The League of Women Voters of Minneapolis, Temple Israel, Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, and many other sponsoring organizations will introduce the work of their agencies at this event. A number of working groups who tackle segments of this issue will explain their roles in both human and policy perspectives. Resource tables will provide information from social service, mental health, and housing agencies working with the homeless. Speakers (some homeless or formerly so) will present their views and how their organizations are dealing with this issue. Call 612-333-6319 for information on free parking.

Feb 25 to 26

2008 NLIHC Annual Policy Conference and Lobby Day, Capital Hilton, 1001 16th St., NW, Washington, DC. Complete details, including hotel and registration information as well as a conference brochure with workshop topics and conference events, are now available on NLIHC's website: www.nlihc.org/conference.

February 28

MN Coalition for Homeless Lobby Day, 9:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., Christ Lutheran Church on Capitol Hill 105 University Ave West, St. Paul. [Register on-line](#) or, contact [Mike Davey](#) for a registration form.

February 28

[Partners in Affordable Housing Policy Workshops and Awards](#), starting at 9:30 a.m., Saint Paul RiverCentre. Event highlights include keynote speaker Congressman Jim Ramstad accepting the first ever Jim Ramstad Lifetime Achievement Award, workshops, and luncheon. Click [here](#) for registration information.

March 18

MHP, MN NAHRO, League of MN Cities, Metro Cities, and Edam Day at the Capitol, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Best Western Kelley Inn, 161 St. Anthony Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55103. Join the Minnesota Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, The League of Minnesota Cities, Metro Cities, Edam, and Minnesota Housing Partnership to get involved in the state legislative process. Influence the legislative impact to your community, services, and funding. Breakfast will be served at 8:30 a.m. and followed by a legislative briefing by Minnesota's House and Senate leadership. Learn more at [MHP's Web site](#), or call MN NAHRO at 651-675-4490.

March 31

Keeping the Door Open: Strategies for Moving People from Homeless to Employment, St Paul and by video conference. This training is presented by Corporation for Supportive Housing. Details to follow.

If you have any events you would like featured, please contact Barb Jacobs at bjacobs@mhponline.org.

Upcoming Deadlines

March 11

MHP Grants Deadline for April Awards. Minnesota Housing Partnership offers a variety of loans and grants to nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and other affordable housing developers located outside the seven-county Twin Cities metro area. MHP's Loan and Grant programs seek to build organizational competence and support the development or rehabilitation efforts of permanent affordable housing. Loan programs focus on planning, housing development, and organizational development investment. For more information, [visit MHP's Web site](#), or contact Liz Juelich at ejuelich@mhponline.org, or 651-649-1710 ext. 113.

The MHP Bulletin is published by the Minnesota Housing Partnership, distributed monthly, and includes affordable housing news, announcements, legislative updates, publications, and upcoming events. For more information on affordable housing, back issues of *The MHP Bulletin*, to submit news or events to include in future issues, or if you would like to unsubscribe, please contact Barb Jacobs at (651) 649-1710 ext. 117, email bjacobs@mhponline.org.

Minnesota Housing Partnership's mission is to promote homes for all Minnesotans and to assist Minnesota communities in the creation and preservation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income people.