



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Shannon Guernsey
Minnesota Housing Partnership
(651) 925-5544

Housing Need Unprecedented ... And Growing ... in Minnesota

St. Paul, Minn. (January 14, 2009) – The average number of families using Hennepin County shelters each month grew by nearly 60% from 2006 to 2008, according to a new report on Minnesota housing trends released by the Minnesota Housing Partnership. The recent increases in home foreclosures, coupled with higher unemployment and a tightening rental market, have put pressure on many families coping with high housing costs.

The report graphically illustrates that more families are facing the choice between housing and other basic needs such as food and health care. In fact, Minnesota leads the nation in the growth of households spending at least half their income on housing. From 2000 to 2007, Minnesota experienced a 90% increase in the percentage of families severely overburdened with the cost of owning or renting a home, according to the report. By 2007, 253,000 Minnesota households, or 1 in 8, were paying more than half their income for housing.

These trends are especially troubling when coupled with even more recent increases in unemployment and foreclosure rates. The MHP report illustrates that Minnesota's historically low unemployment rate is now trending in parallel with the national unemployment rate, which has been rising. The number of foreclosures also increased markedly in 2008.

"It is time for our state and federal leaders to assure Minnesotans that as we wrestle with jumpstarting the economy, a safety net to meet housing and other basic human needs will be a priority," said Chip Halbach, executive director for the Minnesota Housing Partnership.

The new Minnesota Housing Partnership online report, which includes data on the state as well as the four metropolitan areas of the Twin Cities, Duluth, Rochester, and St. Cloud, can be found on MHP's Web site at www.mhponline.org.

The Minnesota Housing Partnership is a statewide nonprofit organization that advances the preservation and creation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income people as a means of strengthening communities and families. MHP provides local governments and nonprofit housing organizations access to loans, grants, and technical expertise to plan and construct housing, in addition to advocating and educating people on sound housing policies. MHP's work in Greater Minnesota is primarily supported by The McKnight Foundation.

###