

Housing remains the most critical need for runaway and homeless youth/young adults.
according to a needs analysis by the State of MN in a 2007 Legislative Report

Homelessness in Dakota County

Homelessness DOES exist in Dakota County.

On the day of October 26, 2006, 25 people ages 18-21 were homeless in Dakota County.

Each year between 15-20 youth leave Dakota County foster care at age 18; 30-40% of whom are unprepared for independent living, and will lack adequate support systems to maintain housing.

According to the State of Minnesota, 7 Dakota County youth ran away from out-of-home placement in 2006, the fourth highest percent of any county in the state.

The Bridge for Runaway and Homeless Youth in Minneapolis reported seeing 24 youth from Dakota County in 2006. They were from many cities across the county, but the largest single city was Eagan, the site of new youth supportive housing, opening in 2009-2010.

Mental Health needs go unaddressed with homeless youth. 1 in 2 homeless young people in Minnesota reported some type of significant mental health problem, and one third of the same group had considered suicide.

Barriers to Housing Stability for Young Adults in Dakota County include: lack of affordable housing; lack of rental/credit history; lack of independent living skills; low education/low paying jobs; health issues; and for some, history of abuse, neglect, or trauma.

Barriers to Affordable Housing for Young Adults in Dakota County

Dakota has the highest rent burden for "extremely low household" renters of 87 counties in the state. *"Extremely low household" means under 30% of median, which in Dakota County, is \$16,500/year.*

Renting a one-bedroom apartment in Dakota County requires an hourly full-time wage of \$15/hour. For people with no high school diploma in the state, the average starting wage is just \$7.50/hour.

is about to change.

Dakota County has taken steps to increase the array of housing for various populations residing in the county, however, there is *no single site supportive housing for youth in the county.*

In mid 2009, a new supportive housing program will become available for homeless and disabled youth ages 18-24 up in Dakota County. This is the first supportive housing program with this scope dedicated to youth in any Minnesota suburb.

24 efficiency apartments will be available for homeless and disabled youth to live in while receiving intensive independent living skills instruction and advocacy from experienced youth workers.

The goal of this housing program is to prepare youth to become self-sufficient adults.

The Link, a nonprofit organization with experience in supportive housing, was chosen by Dakota County to be the service provider for this supportive housing program.

Though this project is well underway, only 50% of needed annual funding has been obtained. Funding is needed to provide independent living skills instruction, employment training, and individualized goal setting and case management for residents.



The Link's mission is to build a supportive community network that links youth and their families to their inner strength through life skills, education, advocacy, supportive housing, and a dynamic network of social services to transform lives.

New Youth Supportive Housing Program: Quick Facts

WHO WILL BE HOUSED?

Homeless and disabled youth ages 18-24. Up to 24 youth can be housed at any given time.

WHO WILL PROVIDE HOUSING?

The Link will provide supportive services to residents. The Dakota County Community Development Agency will provide the building itself and property management.

WHAT WILL BE OFFERED IN ADDITION TO SAFE HOUSING?

The following on-site services will be provided to residents:

- Case management and independent living skills instruction
- Expertise in mental and chemical illness issues, and culturally competent services
- Front desk services, 24/7/365 supervision, and building security
- Employment support including assistance with finding and keeping a job

WHERE WILL THIS HOUSING PROGRAM BE LOCATED?

This new housing program will be located in the Cedar Grove area of Eagan, Minnesota.

WHEN WILL THIS HOUSING PROGRAM OPEN?

Supportive Housing will become available in mid 2009, upon completion of building construction.

HOW WILL THIS HOUSING PROGRAM BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITY?

The project will create much needed affordable housing opportunities for young adults in Eagan and Dakota County. Residents will attain self-sufficiency and become more productive, contributing members of the community. Community members can become involved with The Link's programs as volunteers. Neighborhood employers will gain a convenient pool of entry-level workers, and on-going access to job coaching and training services provided by The Link and its employment program partners. There will also be a decrease in the utilization of more expensive services that result from continued homelessness.

About The Link

The Link was founded in 1991 by two former Minnesota Vikings players in collaboration with Leonard Lindquist who shared a vision of bringing opportunity and positive relationships to disempowered youth living in impoverished neighborhoods. This grassroots initiative has since blossomed into an experienced youth service organization. Over the past 17 years, The Link has touched the lives of nearly 15,000 youth and their family members. The Link opened one of the first youth supportive housing programs in Minnesota in 2005 (Lindquist Apartments, Minneapolis) and has the capacity to successfully develop this new housing program in Dakota County.

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