

Senate Finance

05/05/2022 Upon Adjournment

HB22-1377 Grant Program Providing Responses To Homelessness

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Naomi Amaha</p> <p>For</p> <p>The Denver Foundation</p>	<p>Members of the Senate Finance Committee,</p> <p>On behalf of The Denver Foundation, I am writing to express our support for House Bill 1377 by Senators Julie Gonzales and Chris Kolker.</p> <p>The Denver Foundation is a community foundation with a history of funding nonprofit organizations working to address homelessness across Metro Denver. We believe programs that support people experiencing homelessness should be well-funded and aim to respond to the needs of the individual.</p> <p>Homelessness is a longstanding and growing issue in Metro Denver, exacerbated by the increasing cost of living, lack of affordable housing, and over the last year, the COVID-19 pandemic. As a funder and convener of community stakeholders, we recognize that there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to housing and homelessness and that investment in longer-term strategies is critical to ensure that individuals experiencing homelessness receive services that can help them be placed in and sustain permanent housing.</p> <p>This historic funding opportunity will help support localized approaches by nonprofit and local governments to work to address the root causes of homelessness. We thank the bill sponsors and proponents of HB22-1377 and ask for a yes vote on this bill.</p>



May 5, 2022

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am pleased to submit this comment on behalf of Enterprise Community Partners urging your support of **HB 1377: Grant Program Providing Responses to Homelessness.**

Enterprise works nationally and throughout Colorado to increase the supply of high-quality, affordable housing, advance racial equity, and build resilience and upward mobility. Still, more and more Coloradans are without homes in all areas of our state—especially low-income and otherwise marginalized people who continue to bear the brunt of the pandemic.

HB 1377 represents a much-needed, flexible investment in frontline entities serving those experiencing homelessness and helping to resolve it, at a time when many local governments and direct services organizations have been stretched extraordinarily thin by pandemic response. And we see important and valuable synergies between these funds and those that will be unlocked through HB 1083: Homelessness Contribution Income Tax Credits.

I am particularly pleased to be able to support this bill having served on the subpanel advising the Affordable Housing Transformational Task Force, which recognized the critical importance of investing in permanent supportive housing and supportive services for individuals seeking to exit chronic homelessness.

And Enterprise partnered with many other organizations and the City of Denver on the Denver Supportive Housing Social Impact Bond, an extensively evaluated initiative that proved investing in a housing-first approach with intensive support services can break the homelessness-jail cycle with considerable benefits to communities and governments. We are excited to see similar resources become available to people statewide through these funds through allowances for permanent supportive housing development, and for funds to extend existing housing providers' ability to deliver supportive services.

Enterprise does recommend the program preference project proposals that reflect many of the best practices utilized in the successful Denver social impact bond, such as person-centered and trauma-informed care that provides access to desired services with few prerequisites.

Enterprise is pleased to support this bill and ask for your yes vote on HB 1377.

Please feel free to contact me at khasstedt@enterprisecommunity.org or Amy Pitlik with Mendez Barkis at amy@mendezbarkis.com with further questions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kinsey Hasstedt
Director, State & Local Policy

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May 5, 2022

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee –

I am writing to express strong support from the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless for House Bill 1377 – Grant Program Providing Responses to Homelessness. HB1377 is such a huge opportunity for our state to make a meaningful investment in homelessness resolution for the far too many families and individuals experiencing it across Colorado. It has been very encouraging to see the Governor’s Office and our elected leaders engage and partner with local communities and nonprofits who have been working for decades to prevent and resolve homelessness in a very under-resourced environment.

COVID really laid bare the gaps in our system that have made homelessness resolution so difficult. Housing instability, job loss, capacity issues at shelters, and the lack of recovery spaces for people experiencing homelessness who are sick with COVID, or anything else for that matter, were never so apparent as they have been over the last couple of years. And as we watched our unhoused community suffer from a disproportionate impact of the pandemic aligned with all the other historical barriers they were already facing in accessing housing, healthcare, recovery services, and meaningful opportunities to integrate into community, I think we all knew we could wait no longer to act.

We have a chance with these funds, not just to address the COVID impacts, but to begin to reduce these historical barriers that have prevented so many of our neighbors from being able to access safe spaces for sheltering and pathways to housing.

And, while these are one-time investments, they have the opportunity to leverage other programs and funds, to create sustainable, long-term programs that can build out our safety net so that an experience of homelessness for anyone who must endure it can be brief and more quickly resolvable. For example, pairing these with HB 1083, Homelessness Contribution Tax Credit which was considered and passed this year to expand the Enterprise Tax Zone tax credit for homeless service providers across the state for a broader range of homelessness resolution strategies.

Aligning HB22-1377 funds with projects that are subsidized, in part, with tax credits from HB22-1083, ensures funds (1) are leveraged with each other to the greatest extent possible, (2) encourage public/private partnerships and local community investments, and (3) the tax credit will maximize the value and long-term impact of the one-time funds.

We are also appreciative of the flexibility of this grant program so that local communities can apply for funding to address specific local needs which is critical because homelessness does not look the same in our rural communities as it does in our urban areas and interventions need to be targeted in the most responsive way to local needs. Also, these funds can be used across the spectrum of needs from street outreach and shelter all the way to supportive and affordable housing.

We are appreciative of the sponsors for bringing this important legislation and strongly encourage a “yes” vote today.

All the best –

Cathy Alderman

Chief Communications and Public Policy Officer

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless