

April 18, 2025

Mayor Erica Zweifel
City of Northfield
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057

Representative Angie Craig
1915 Plaza Dr.
Suite 202
Eagan, MN 55122

Dear Representative Craig,


As Mayor of the City of Northfield, I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for our submission of the Northfield Community Resource Center (NCRC) for 2026 Community Project Funding. This proposal represents an important opportunity for the City of Northfield to strengthen the well-being of our community through expanded access to the essential services and support offered within the NCRC.

Since 1999, the NCRC has served as a cornerstone for this community and the surrounding areas, providing a centralized hub for critical resources by bringing together multiple service organizations under one roof. Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) advances health and racial equity through educational and economic opportunities. The Community Action Center (CAC) offers food access, housing support, and many other services. FiftyNorth provides programs that inspire and enrich the lives of adults over 50. The Rice County United Way is committed to the health, education, and financial stability of everyone in our community. Workforce Development is dedicated to developing and advancing the workforce of Southeast Minnesota through career pathways and additional support. Recently, the Northfield Public Library opened a satellite location at the NCRC to expand access for those who utilize the center's services.

The requested funding will allow the NCRC to enhance its infrastructure, expand its capacity, and improve accessibility—particularly for underserved populations such as low-income families, seniors, and individuals experiencing housing insecurity. These improvements are not only timely but necessary, as the demand for NCRC's services continues to grow.

As Mayor, I have seen firsthand the positive impact the NCRC has had on our residents and the essential role it plays in strengthening our local social fabric. Investing in this project aligns directly with federal priorities around equitable access, public health, and economic opportunity. I fully support this funding request.

Sincerely,


Erica Zweifel
Mayor, City of Northfield, MN



Kerry Hjelmgren, Executive Director
FiftyNorth Senior Center
1651 Jefferson Parkway
Northfield, Minnesota 55057

April 15, 2025

The Honorable Angie Craig
1915 Plaza Drive, Suite 202
Eagan, Minnesota 55122

Dear Representative Craig,

I am writing to voice my wholehearted support for the City of Northfield to receive community project funding, specifically for renovation and capital improvements for the Northfield Community Resource Center (NCRC). The NCRC is a 25-year-old city-owned building that holds deep significance for many individuals and families in the southeastern region of Minnesota. Funding would provide an opportunity to renew a space that serves all ages of the Northfield community.

For 25 years, the NCRC has powerfully impacted lives. It's where children attend Head Start, where individuals and parents access food and resources to support their families, where seniors gather to stay connected, and where neighbors come together in times of celebration and times of need. It is one of the rare places where people from all walks of life feel seen, supported, and valued.

Today, the building itself is struggling to keep up with the weight of its mission. Outdated infrastructure, limited accessibility, and aging facilities are barriers to the functionality and usefulness of the space. Renovating the NCRC will make it possible for the nonprofits within it to continue serving and strengthening the fabric of our community.

FiftyNorth Senior Center rents approximately 18,000 square feet of the NCRC building. Our organization is open year-round for fitness, wellness, life-long learning, socialization, art, and music, to keep older adults active, engaged, and connected at every age over 50. We have over 2,100 members who use our facility over 115,000 times each year. We also partner with Making Waves Swim School, which teaches 300+ children to swim in our warm water pool every Sunday. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, our membership has steadily grown. In order for us to continue advancing our mission and serving our members and the greater community, renovation of the current space will be crucial in the coming years.

I hope you will stand with our community by providing community project funding for capital improvements to the NCRC building. The return on this investment will be measured not just in

economic terms, but in human ones—in brighter futures, stronger connections, and a deeper sense of belonging for everyone who calls Northfield home.

Many thanks for your consideration to support the City of Northfield and its partners!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry Hjelmgren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

Kerry Hjelmgren, Executive Director
FiftyNorth Senior Center



Healthy Community Initiative

1651 Jefferson Parkway
Northfield, MN 55057
507-664-3524
healthycommunityinitiative.org

April 15, 2025

Representative Angie Craig
1915 Plaza Dr.
Suite 202
Eagan, MN 55122

Dear Representative Craig,

I am writing on behalf of the Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) to offer our strong support for the City of Northfield's proposal to upgrade building space at the Northfield Community Resource Center, 1651 Jefferson Parkway, Northfield, MN 55057.

HCI has leased office and classroom space on both floors of the two-story portion of the building for more than 20 years. Our ability to co-locate with other essential community services - including Head Start, the local food shelf, the Rice County Area United Way, Rice County government services, and our community's senior center - has been essential to fulfilling our mission to create a collaborative community where all youth thrive. HCI also benefits from having office space at the Northfield Community Resource Center due to its proximity to local elementary, middle and high schools where our flagship programs operate.

Updates to the Northfield Community Resource Center building space will have direct positive impacts on our work, ensuring our employees and the youth participating in our programs have safe workspaces and access to modern technology infrastructure and amenities that make work more efficient and effective.

We value our partnership with the City of Northfield and appreciate their continued efforts to provide us and our partner nonprofits with high-quality, affordable office and program space that promotes community collaboration. Thank you for your consideration of their request!

Sincerely,

Tom Steinmetz, Executive Director
tom@healthycommunityinitiative.org



April 15, 2025

The Honorable Representative Angie Craig
1915 Plaza Drive
Suite 202
Eagan, MN 55122

Dear Representative Craig,

I am writing on behalf of Three Rivers Community Action to express our strong support for the City of Northfield's intent to seek funding to improve the Northfield Community Resource Center (NCRC) building. The NCRC is a vital asset to our community, serving as a hub for numerous essential services and programs that benefit residents of all ages.

Three Rivers Community Action relies heavily on the NCRC to house our Early Childhood programming, including Head Start and two private childcare partnerships. These programs are crucial for the development and well-being of young children in our community, providing them with a strong foundation for future success. It also allows us to support parents and provide wrap-around services to the families. The NCRC's facilities enable us to offer high-quality early childhood education and care, which is indispensable for working families in Northfield.

Beyond our own programs, the NCRC serves as an important community hub for many other groups, including older adults, students, and households with lower incomes. The building is home to many nonprofits and government agencies who work collaboratively to serve our community. The NCRC is frequently used by community members for a variety of services, making it a central and accessible location for those in need. The NCRC's role in fostering community engagement and support cannot be overstated.

The NCRC building needs significant improvements to continue serving the community effectively. Upgrading the facilities will ensure that the building remains a safe, welcoming, and functional space for all who rely on it. Improved infrastructure will enhance the delivery of services and programs, benefiting countless individuals and families in Northfield. Additionally, receiving grant funds will relieve maintenance expenses for the many nonprofit organizations who are housed in the building, allowing us to focus resources on providing essential services to the community.

Three Rivers Community Action wholeheartedly supports the City of Northfield's efforts to secure funding for these necessary improvements. Investing in the NCRC is an investment in the well-being and future of our community. We urge decision-makers to consider the application favorably and provide the funding needed to enhance this critical resource.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information or support.

Sincerely,

Jenny Larson, Executive Director

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1414 Northstar Drive
Zumbrota, MN 55992
Phone: 507-316-0610
www.threeriverscap.org
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Faribault Office
1810 30th Street NW
Faribault, MN 55021

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Suite 1302
1926 College View Rd
Rochester, MN 55904

Wabasha Office
Suite 120
611 Broadway Avenue
Wabasha, MN 55981



Rice County Area **UNITED WAY**

1651 Jefferson Pkwy, Suite HS 122, Northfield, MN 55057 | 507-664-3510

laura@ricecountyunitedway.org

April 16, 2025

Representative Angie Craig
1915 Plaza Dr.
Suite 202
Eagan, MN 55122

Dear Representative Craig:

I am writing this letter in strong support of the City of Northfield's proposal to make much needed upgrades to the Northfield Community Resource Center. I am the Executive Director of Rice County Area United Way, one of many vibrant programs which makes its home in the Northfield Community Resource Center. The Northfield Community Resource Center houses many of the most crucial agencies serving our community, including the Community Action Center and Healthy Community Initiative. Every morning when I come into the office, dozens of community members are waiting to receive much needed services such as housing advocacy and food shelf support.

The services provided by the departments housed in the Northfield Community Resource Center have never been in such high demand. ALICE, a tool utilized by United Way, is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed—households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county. Many Northfield residents continue to struggle, especially as wages fail to keep pace with the rising cost of household essentials—housing, child care, food, transportation, and health care. In Rice County 41% of households fall below the ALICE Threshold—ALICE households plus those in

poverty. Right now our building does not live up to the standard that we want to maintain for non-profits who support the most vulnerable members of our community.

While state of the art when it was first built, our building is now in dire need of basic updates for it to function properly. Recently I went upstairs to the break room to find that a section of the ceiling tile had fallen and was crumbled on the ground. Bathrooms are falling apart and badly in need of updates and repair.

The Northfield Community Resource Center is crucial to my organization because it's truly the most recognized hub for non-profits here in Rice County. United Way's presence in this building makes it easy for all key stakeholders—community partners, business leaders, and donors—to locate us and recognize our function as core to the City of Northfield.

I urge you to support the City of Northfield's proposal to fund much needed updates and repairs to the Northfield Community Resource Center so it can continue to serve our community for decades to come.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Riehle-Merrill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Laura" being more prominent.

Laura Riehle-Merrill, Executive Director, Rice County Area United Way

DISTRICT OFFICE

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www.northfieldschools.org

April 17, 2025

Representative Angie Craig
1915 Plaza Dr
Suite 202
Eagan, MN 55122

Dear Representative Craig:

On behalf of the Northfield School District, I am writing to express our support for upgrades and maintenance to the Northfield Community Resource Center (NCRC). The NCRC serves as a vital hub in our community, housing organizations including the Community Action Center, Rice County United Way, Healthy Community Initiative (HCI), and FiftyNorth Senior Center. These organizations provide critical services that support the well-being, education, and health of students, families, and residents throughout the Northfield area.

As a school district, we witness firsthand the positive impact the NCRC and the organizations it houses have on our students and families. From food security to youth programming and community wellness initiatives, the resources provided by the NCRC are instrumental in helping our students thrive both inside and outside the classroom. Upgrading and maintaining this shared space will ensure that these essential organizations can continue their work effectively in a safe, accessible, and welcoming environment.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of the Northfield community.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Hillmann, Ed.D.
Superintendent