



Community Action Center (CAC) and Northfield Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Partnership Update 517 Washington Street – Emergency Shelter

Summary: The partnership between CAC and HRA to provide a safe, sustainable, and flexible emergency shelter option has been a tremendous success. CAC works with families and individuals in desperate circumstances, often with young children and even infants. The flexibility of this partnership with HRA empowers CAC to tailor the use of the space to the needs of the family. This can be 1-3 nights of emergency shelter to bridge the gap following an eviction. Or it can be 3-4 months of stabilizing housing for a family to find employment and gain access to other affordable housing options.

Important Qualities:

- ❖ **Location:** Having a shelter integrated into a residential district of the community is the BEST option. Additionally, the proximity to the downtown area is vital for transportation and ease of access to other services.
- ❖ **City partnership:** The structure of a collaborative partnership between the City and CAC provides the right infrastructure for a *community effort* related to supportive services, law enforcement, public awareness, and public/private partnerships.
- ❖ **Cost-effective:** This partnership shares costs between the city and CAC in a way that both can see the value of their investment. Additionally, alternative solutions (ie: building a large-scale shelter) are more expensive, less effective, and less desired by the community.

Challenges:

- ❖ **After-hours support:** CAC does not have the resources to provide 24/7 support. Collaborative partnerships with Hope Center in Faribault and Northfield PD help in crisis, but not on-going evening and weekend support.
- ❖ **Privacy:** This is extremely private and confidential work. The location, address, and nature of emergency shelter creates difficult privacy concerns for CAC, NPD, and the city of Northfield.
- ❖ **Lack of affordable housing:** The lack of the *next* affordable housing option after shelter can create a waiting list for emergency shelter. “*Emergency*” and “*waiting list*” are difficult words to pair in the same sentence.

Numbers: A presentation of data and demographics of clients using the shelter will be presented at the March HRA meeting. The shelter is occupied over 330 nights every year, only vacant in transition and for cleaning.