

---

**Sponsor:** Housing Stability

**Meeting Date:** 7/28/2026

**Title:** Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Saint Paul for  
Emergency Shelters

**File Number:** 2026-284

---

**Background and Rationale:**

On July 8, 2026 Mayor Kaohly Her announced plans to begin a rolling closure of encampments within the city of Saint Paul (City) beginning with Pig's Eye Park on August 5, 2026.

The city of Saint Paul is responsible for managing public spaces and making decisions regarding encampments, including when and how encampments are closed. Ramsey County's role is to support residents experiencing unsheltered homelessness by connecting them to emergency shelter, housing resources, health care, behavioral health services, income supports, and other services that help individuals transition toward stable housing and long-term stability.

Emergency shelter is one component of the broader homelessness response system. Achieving long-term stability requires a coordinated continuum of services that includes homelessness prevention, street outreach, emergency shelter, housing navigation, permanent housing, and ongoing supportive services. Additional information about the regional homelessness response system is available through Heading Home Ramsey

Since the City's announcement, Ramsey County has implemented a coordinated, countywide response to support residents affected by the encampment closures.

- **Coordinated Leadership:** County and City leadership are meeting regularly to align decisions, remove barriers, and coordinate the response in real time.
- **Joint Outreach:** County staff continue to work alongside the City's HART Team to provide coordinated outreach, engagement, and connections to services.
- **Expanded County Response:** The County has expanded its Community Wellness and Response Initiative to provide integrated health, housing, behavioral health, financial assistance, and social service supports.
- **Connecting Residents to Services:** County staff are helping residents access housing navigation, emergency shelter, health care, behavioral health services, financial assistance, and other supports that promote housing stability.
- **Meeting Basic Needs:** Outreach teams are providing food, water, hygiene items, and other essential supplies while building trust and connecting residents to available resources.

According to city estimates, 140 individuals currently reside at Pig's Eye Park encampment. Existing emergency shelter capacity is limited. On July 22, 2026 Ramsey County entered into a contract with Catholic Charities to expand capacity by 49 emergency shelter beds at Higher Ground, leveraging the County's Emergency Shelter Grant solicitation for an amount not to exceed \$969,500.

These beds are paired with trauma-informed shelter advocates who provide crisis intervention, housing and service navigation, and ongoing support to help residents stabilize and connect to longer-term resources. Residents also have access to the St. Paul Opportunity Center, which offers meals, showers, laundry, mail services, employment assistance, storage, and coordinated

connections to county, veteran, and community-based services. The shelter also accommodates pets and provides limited personal storage.

Current funding for the emergency shelter expansion is through Ramsey County's Local Affordable Housing Aid (LAHA) allocation. The City has allocated \$200,000 toward the Higher Ground expansion contract and an additional \$880,000 for Ramsey County to administer a new solicitation to expand emergency shelter bed capacity.

Under this partnership, Ramsey County would manage the solicitation process and enter into agreement(s) with selected organizations to establish and operate additional emergency shelter beds and provide shelter services for residents experiencing homelessness in the City of Saint Paul.

These additional emergency shelter beds address a longstanding community need by expanding overall shelter capacity rather than shifting existing resources. While they will help support the response to encampment closures, they also strengthen the broader emergency shelter system by increasing available capacity, reducing harm, improving safety, and creating additional pathways for housing stabilization. Access to permanent housing remains unchanged, as all residents will continue to be prioritized through the Coordinated Entry System using community-wide assessment and prioritization criteria.

**Recommendation:**

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the joint powers agreement with the city of Saint Paul to accept Local Affordable Housing Aid funds to respond to unsheltered homelessness jointly serve through a coordinated partnership for the period of July 28, 2026, through December 31, 2028.
2. Authorize receipt of \$1,080,000 from the city of Saint Paul to reimburse Ramsey County for allowable costs to support the creation and expansion of emergency shelter, stabilization and connections to housing and other supportive resources for individuals experiencing homelessness, including those impacted by the encampment closures over the course of the term of the joint powers agreement.
3. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the agreement.
4. Authorize the County Manager to establish a project number for the emergency shelters in the Housing Stability's Department budget.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Moran, seconded by Commissioner Xiong.  
Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Moran, Ortega, and Xiong

By: \_\_\_\_\_



Jason Yang, Chief Clerk - County Board