



Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING COLLABORATION BETWEEN CITY ADMINISTRATION, CITY COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO ADDRESS THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF HOMELESSNESS.

CITY PROPOSAL:

WHEREAS, in 2005 the city of Duluth and St. Louis County began a comprehensive community planning process for the Duluth/St. Louis County ten-year plan to end homelessness;

WHEREAS, by Resolution 07-0240 the council adopted the Heading Home St. Louis County: a Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness as part of the city's comprehensive plan. The city committed resources and staff to work with St. Louis County to reduce homelessness and appointed city leaders to the St. Louis County Homeless Leadership Council;

WHEREAS, both statewide and local trends show a decline in the number of persons experiencing homelessness since 2014 indicating that the emphasis on "housing first," and housing assistance policies are positively addressing homelessness issues in our community; and

WHEREAS, although the number of homeless is decreasing, members of our community are still struggling with the adverse effects of poverty and homelessness. In 2014, by Resolution 14-0042, the city council recognized a petition to establish a Duluth Homeless Bill of Rights and expressed the council's intent to address the issues of hunger, homelessness and poverty in the city of Duluth with the help of Duluth's human rights commission.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that:

1. For purposes of this resolution, person experiencing homelessness shall mean an individual who lacks a fixed, regular day or night-time residence, or has a primary day or night-time residence that is:
 - a. A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
 - b. An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized;
 - c. A public or private place not designed for human habitation, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 - d. A low-cost motel or other situation without a long-term lease; or
 - e. Sharing the housing of friends or family without a legal right to remain.
2. It is the policy of the city council to be understanding and sensitive to the needs and rights of persons experiencing homelessness, and to acknowledge that all persons, including people experiencing homelessness, have the right to be peacefully in any public place to the extent their activities are lawful. Therefore, the council, in enacting ordinances and approving resolutions will act in a manner that protects the needs, rights and dignity of persons experiencing homelessness.
3. The council will work diligently with city administration, community partners, the Duluth citizen review board, and the Duluth human rights commission to do the following:
 - a. Evaluate current strategies addressing homelessness to identify best practices and policies that positively impact homeless and marginalized communities and support funding for such strategies;

- b. Support funding for a variety of housing options designed to reduce the number of persons experiencing homelessness;
- c. Emphasize frequent interactions and engagement with the city's homeless and marginalized populations to craft creative and compassionate solutions to the issues facing those communities;
- d. Support law enforcement initiatives designed to curb dangerous or violent conduct, but also to avoid unduly interfering with life sustaining conduct, such as sleeping, eating and resting;
- e. Identify and support funding for city staff responsible for coordinating and tracking the city's efforts to reduce homelessness; and
- f. Support funding for training of city employees whose job responsibilities involve contact with person experiencing homelessness.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to renew the city of Duluth's commitment to reducing homelessness and developing best practices that are compassionate and effective in mitigating the adverse effects of homelessness.