

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND  
RECIPIENT AGREEMENT  
Between  
Economic Development Authority of Mankato (“Grantor”)  
and  
Connections Shelter (“Recipient”)  
For  
Expanded Summer Emergency Shelter Services (2026)**

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**THIS AGREEMENT**

This Agreement is entered into this 12th day of May 2026, by and between the Economic Development Authority of Mankato (“Grantor”) and Connections Shelter, a Minnesota nonprofit organization (“Recipient”).

The Grantor has allocated Affordable Housing Trust Fund resources to expand emergency shelter services in the Mankato area during periods of limited availability. The Recipient has demonstrated the capacity to deliver these services in alignment with community needs and established best practices.

Accordingly, the parties agree as follows:

**I. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

**A. Activities**

The Recipient shall plan, implement, and operate expanded emergency shelter services from May 1, 2026, through September 30, 2026, as described within this agreement and their proposal attached as Exhibit A. These services are intended to address a critical seasonal gap in shelter availability and support the community’s broader goal of transitioning to a year-round emergency shelter system.

Services shall include operation of a low-barrier emergency shelter providing safe, supervised overnight accommodations, intake and screening, light meals or snacks, hygiene access, and basic supplies. The Recipient shall maintain a safe, adequately staffed environment and be responsive to participant’s needs, including the ability to respond to crises and coordinate with emergency services when necessary.

The Recipient shall also provide on-site case management to connect participants to permanent housing, healthcare, behavioral health services, and other supports. Participation in Coordinated Entry, case conferencing, and outreach efforts to ensure participants are connected to appropriate housing opportunities and services.

Priority shall be given to adults experiencing homelessness, including unsheltered individuals, residing in encampments, and those displaced due to lack of shelter options.

B. Service Model Requirements

The Recipient shall deliver all services in accordance with evidence-based best practices. The program should operate under a Housing First framework, ensuring that individuals are not required to meet preconditions such as sobriety or treatment participation to access shelter. The Recipient shall incorporate harm reduction strategies that prioritize safety and well-being while maintaining a non-punitive approach to substance use and other high-risk behaviors.

All services should be trauma-informed, recognizing the impact of trauma and promoting safety, trust, and empowerment. The Recipient shall utilize person-centered and strengths-based approaches that honor individual choice and support long-term stability. Services must also be culturally responsive, ensuring equitable access and inclusivity for diverse populations, including BIPOC communities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and persons with disabilities.

The Recipient shall utilize data-driven practices, including consistent use of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), to monitor outcomes and inform continuous improvement.

C. Site and Operations

The Recipient shall operate the shelter in its current location within the City of Mankato that is suitable for emergency shelter services. The facility must provide safe and climate-appropriate sleeping accommodation and be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The Recipient shall establish and implement clear operational procedures, including defined hours of operation, check-in and check-out processes, and guest conduct policies. The shelter should maintain adequate staffing levels to ensure safety and quality of services, with a client-to-staff ratio acceptable to the Grantor.

The Recipient shall implement safety and security protocols, including on-site supervision, emergency response procedures, and coordination with local emergency responders. The program shall also include a grievance process to ensure that participant concerns are addressed in a fair and respectful manner.

D. Staffing and Training

The Recipient shall employ qualified staff to operate the shelter and deliver services. Staff shall receive ongoing training to ensure high-quality service delivery and compliance with best practices. Required training areas include trauma-informed care, de-escalation and crisis intervention, harm reduction strategies, Housing First principles, HMIS data compliance, cultural competency, and emergency response procedures such as CPR, First Aid, and naloxone administration.

The Recipient shall maintain appropriate supervision and support for staff and ensure that personnel are equipped to effectively serve individuals with complex needs.

E. Collaboration and Partnerships

The Recipient shall actively collaborate with local service providers, healthcare agencies, and other community stakeholders to ensure comprehensive support for shelter participants. This includes participation in Coordinated Entry, local case conferencing, and street outreach efforts.

The Recipient shall foster partnerships that enhance access to housing resources and promote successful transitions to permanent housing. The Recipient shall also engage with community members, including individuals with lived experience, to inform program development and implementation.

Client confidentiality must be maintained. Participation in the River Valleys CoC Release of Information (ROI) is required to support coordinated service delivery.

F. Data Management and Reporting

The Recipient shall maintain accurate, timely, and complete records of all program activities, client engagement, and outcomes. All data shall be entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in compliance with applicable standards and privacy requirements.

The Recipient shall submit monthly reports to the Grantor that include, at a minimum, shelter utilization, participant demographics, services provided, and housing outcomes. These reports should support performance monitoring, accountability, and continuous quality improvement.

Monthly required reporting shall include the HMIS 001 – Core Demographics and Outcomes Report, which provides client demographic characteristics, subpopulation data, exit destinations, and income sources. The Recipient shall also submit the HMIS Data Integrity Report to validate the accuracy and completeness of reported data.

The Recipient shall track and report referrals and coordination with local providers and resources. Narrative or manual records of referrals and service connections shall be consistent with HMIS data, including documented outcomes at program exit.

The Recipient shall collect and report county of residence data for all participants at the point of application and prior to program entry, as captured through the waitlist or intake process. This data shall be included in monthly reporting and must be sufficient to demonstrate local need for services.

G. Performance Measures

The Recipient shall ensure continuous shelter operations throughout the contract period, to provide year-round service, and demonstrate the capacity to effectively serve the target population. The Recipient shall maintain appropriate staffing ratios as outlined in the attached proposal (Exhibit A), actively participate in coordinated housing systems,

and demonstrate measurable progress in connecting participants to housing and supportive services.

Failure to meet performance expectations may result in corrective action, contract modification, or termination.

## **II. TERM**

The term of this Agreement shall begin on May 1, 2026, and shall conclude on September 30, 2026. The Agreement may be extended upon mutual written agreement of both parties, subject to funding availability and satisfactory performance.

## **III. BUDGET**

The Recipient shall adhere to an approved line-item budget, attached as Exhibit B, that includes all program-related revenues and expenses, such as personnel, facility costs, supplies, food, and operating costs. All expenditure must be reasonable, necessary, and directly related to program operations.

The total amount of funding provided under this Agreement shall not exceed \$135,283.00. Any modifications to the approved budget must be authorized in writing by the Grantor.

## **IV. PAYMENT**

The Grantee will pay to the Recipient funds available under this Agreement based upon information submitted by the Recipient and consistent with any approved budget and Grantee policy concerning payments. Payments will be made for eligible expenses actually incurred by the Recipient, and not to exceed actual cash requirements. Payments will be adjusted by the Grantee in accordance with advance fund and program income balances available in Recipient accounts. In addition, the Grantee reserves the right to liquidate funds available under this Agreement for costs incurred by the Grantee on behalf of the Recipient. Payments shall be made on a reimbursement basis for eligible expenses incurred by the Recipient. The total amount to be paid by the Grantor under this Agreement shall not exceed One Hundred Thirty-Five Thousand, Two Hundred Eighty-Three Dollars (\$135,283.00). Drawdowns for the payment of eligible expenses shall be made against the line-item budgets specified in Paragraph III herein and in accordance with performance.

Payments may be contingent upon certification of the Subrecipient's financial management system in accordance with the standards specified in Uniform Administrative requirements, cost principles and audit requirements, 2 CFR Part 200 the uniform guidance of the award.

The Recipient shall submit invoices and supporting documentation as required by the Grantor. Staff time provided will be broken down to show specific hours provided for service at shelter.

## **V. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The Grantor may monitor performance through reports, HMIS data, and site visits. The Recipient shall cooperate with all monitoring activities. Corrective action may be required for failure to meet expectations.

## VI. OTHER GENERAL CONDITIONS

### A. General Compliance

The Recipient shall perform all activities funded by this award in accordance with: (i) the award, including any amendments thereto; (ii) the award data attached hereto as Exhibit A. including any amendments thereto; (iii) the approved services within this Agreement, including any amendments thereto. In addition, Recipient shall cooperate fully with the Grantor in its efforts to comply with the requirements of the award, including any amendments thereto.

The Recipient shall perform all activities funded by this award in accordance with all applicable State and local laws, including without limitation laws which regulate the use of the award funds. The term "state and local laws" as used in this Agreement shall mean all applicable statutes, rules, regulations, executive orders, directives, or other laws, including all laws as presently in effect and as may be amended or otherwise altered during the agreement term, as well as all such laws which may be enacted or otherwise become effective during the Agreement term. The term "State and local law" shall include, without limitation:

- (1) Grants Administration Regulations. MN Department of Treasury regulations.
- (2) Administrative Requirements: Cost Principles; Audit Requirements. Recipient shall comply with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and audit requirements, 2 CFR Part 200.
- (3) Covenant Against Contingent Fees. Recipient represents and warrants that no person or entity has been employed or retained to solicit or secure this Agreement upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee. In the event of a breach or violation of this representation and warranty, the Grantor shall have the right to annul this Agreement without liability or, in its discretion, to offset against amounts it owes Recipient under this Agreement or otherwise recover from Recipient the full amount of such commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, and to seek any other legal remedies available to its because of such breach.
- (4) Suspension and Debarment. Recipient represents that neither it nor any of its principals has been debarred, suspended or determined ineligible to participate in federal assistance awards or contracts as defined in regulations implementing Office of Management and Budget Guidelines on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (No procurement) in Executive Order 12549. Recipient further agrees that it will notify Grantor immediately if it or any of its principals is placed on the list of parties excluded from federal procurement or no procurement programs available at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov).

### B. "Independent Contractor"

Nothing contained in this Agreement is intended to, or shall be construed in any manner, as creating or establishing the relationship of employer/employee between the parties. The Recipient shall at all times remain an "independent contractor" with respect to the services to be performed under this Agreement. The Grantor shall be exempt from payment of all Unemployment Compensation, FICA, retirement, life and/or medical insurance and Workers' Compensation Insurance, as the Subrecipient is an independent contractor.

C. Hold Harmless

The Recipient shall hold harmless, defend and indemnify the Grantor from all claims, actions, suits, charges and judgments whatsoever that arise out of the Subrecipient's performance or nonperformance of the services or subject matter called for in this Agreement.

D. Workers' Compensation

The Recipient shall provide Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage for all its employees involved in the performance of this Agreement.

E. Insurance and Bonding

- a. Bonding: The Recipient will be required to always maintain, during the term of the Contract, a fidelity bond or insurance coverage for employee dishonesty with a minimum amount of \$100,000.00 covering the activity of each person authorized to receive or distribute monies under the term of this Contract. A copy of the Recipient's bond or insurance certificate shall be delivered to the Grantor at the beginning of this Contract term and on an annual basis thereafter.
- b. Indemnity: The Recipient agrees that it will always defend, indemnify, and hold harmless, the Grantor against all liability, loss, damages, costs and expenses which the Grantor, may hereafter sustain, incur, or be required to pay:
  - ( 1) By reason of any applicant or eligible person suffering bodily or personal injury, death, or property loss or damage either while participating in or receiving the care and services to be furnished under this contract, or while on premises owned, leased, or operated by the Recipient, or while being transported to or from said premises in any vehicle owned, operated, leased, chartered, or otherwise contracted for by the Recipient or any officer, agent, or employee thereof; or
  - (2) By reason of any applicant or eligible person causing injury to, or damage to, the property of another person, during any time when the Recipient or any officer, agent, or employee thereof has undertaken or is furnishing the care and services called for under this Contract; or
  - (3) By reason of any negligent act or omission or intentional act of the Recipient, its agents, officers, or employees which causes bodily injury, death, personal injury, property loss, or damage to another during the performance of Purchased Services under this contract.
- c. Insurance: The Recipient further agrees, to protect itself as well as the Grantor under the indemnity contract provision set forth above, its officers, agents, employees, and servants as additional insureds, but only as the operations under this contract. It will always during the term of the Contract, and beyond such term when so required, have and keep in force a general liability insurance policy. Any insurance required to be provided by the Recipient shall be primary, and not excess, to any other coverage carried by the Grantor. The selected insurance company of the Recipient must be acceptable to the Grantor. The Recipient is responsible for any deductible or self-insured retention contained within the insurance program.

- (1) The Recipient will purchase occurrence-based liability insurance. The policy shall include coverage for all applicable liabilities arising out of premises, operations, independent Subrecipients, products, completed operations, personal and advertising injury, and liability assumed under a contract. An umbrella liability policy may be used in conjunction with the primary coverage limits to meet the minimum limit requirements for each coverage. The Grantor shall be listed as an additional insured.
- (2) The applicable liability insurance coverage will meet the limits as shown below or be equal to the tort liability limits under Minnesota Statutes, M.S. 466.04 whichever is greater:
  - a) Commercial General Liability Coverage
    - \$3,000,000.00 for general aggregate coverage
    - \$3,000,000.00 for products and completed operations aggregate
    - \$1,500,000.00 for each occurrence
    - \$1,500,000.00 for personal injury and advertising injury
    - \$100,000.00 for fire damage limit
    - \$5,000.00 for medical expenses
  - b) Auto liability coverage of \$1,500,000.00 per occurrence. Auto coverage should include any auto, including hired and non-owned.
  - c) Worker's Compensation and employer's liability coverage:
    - Worker's Compensation limits are to be statutory per applicable state and federal laws. Minimum employer's liability coverage:
    - Bodily injury by accident: \$500,000.00 each accident
    - Bodily injury by disease: \$500,000.00 each employee
    - Bodily injury by disease: \$500,000.00 policy limit
- (3) The Grantor must all be listed as additional insured, and the Grantor shall be sent a current, appropriately signed certificate of insurance on an annual basis. The certificate should identify the Grantor as an additional insured for relevant coverages, except Worker's Compensation. The certificate must show that the Grantor will receive sixty (60) calendar days prior written notice in the event of cancelation, nonrenewal, or material change in the described policy.
- (4) If the Recipient is unable to obtain the required insurance coverage, or if the coverage is cancelled during the term of this Agreement, the Recipient must notify the Grantor contract manager (or the contract manager's designee) by telephone or e-mail the same business day as the Recipient receives notice of cancellation or inability to obtain coverage. The Recipient shall also provide written notice to the Grantor contract manager within five (5) business days. The Recipient shall make immediate good faith efforts to obtain or replace the coverage in the open market. If such efforts are unsuccessful, the Recipient shall apply to the Minnesota Joint Underwriting Association for Insurance coverage. Failure to maintain required insurance coverage shall be considered an event of default pursuant to this Agreement.

#### F. Amendments

The Grantee or Recipient may mutually agree to amend this Agreement at any time provided that such amendments make specific reference to this agreement and are

executed in writing by a duly authorized representative of each organization and approved by the Grantee's governing body. Such amendments shall not invalidate this Agreement, nor relieve or release the Grantee or Recipient from their respective obligations under this agreement.

The Grantee may, in its discretion amend this Agreement to conform with Federal, State, or local governmental guidelines, policies, and available funding amounts, or for other reasons. If such amendments result in a change in the funding, the scope of services, or schedule of the activities to be undertaken as part of this Agreement, such modifications will be incorporated only by written amendment signed by both Grantee and Recipient.

#### **G. Suspension or Termination**

The Grantee may suspend or terminate this Agreement if the Recipient materially fails to comply with any terms of this Agreement, which include (but are not limited to) the following:

- a. Failure to comply with any of the rules, regulations or provisions referred to herein, or such statutes, regulations, executive orders, and guidelines, policies or directives as may become applicable at any time;
- b. Failure, for any reason, of the Recipient to fulfill in a timely and proper manner its obligations under this Agreement;
- c. Ineffective or improper use of funds provided under this Agreement; or
- d. Submission by the Recipient to the Grantee reports that are incorrect or incomplete in any material respect.

Prior to the initial distribution of Funds, this Agreement may also be terminated for convenience by either the Grantee or the Recipient, in whole or in part, by setting forth the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. However, if in the case of a partial termination, the Grantee determines that the remaining portion of the award will not accomplish the purpose for which the award was made, the Grantee may terminate the award in its entirety.

### **VII. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. Financial Management**

##### **a. Accounting Standards**

If applicable, the Subrecipient agrees to comply with 24 CFR 84.21-28 and agrees to adhere to the accounting principles and procedures required therein, utilize adequate internal controls, and maintain necessary source documentation for all costs incurred.

##### **b. Cost Principles**

If applicable, the Subrecipient shall administer its program in conformance with OMB Circulars A-122, "Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations," or A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions," as applicable. These principles shall be applied for all costs incurred whether charged on a direct or indirect basis.

## B. Documents and Record Keeping

### a. Records to be Maintained

The Subrecipient shall maintain all records required by the Federal regulations specified in 24 CFR 570.506, which are pertinent to the activities to be funded under this Agreement. Such records should include but not be limited to:

1. Records providing a full description of each activity undertaken;
2. Records required to determine the eligibility of activities
3. Financial Records
4. Other records necessary to document compliance.

### b. Retention

The Recipient shall retain all financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to the Agreement for a period of four (4) years. The retention period begins on the last day of service period. Notwithstanding the above, if there is litigation, claims, audits, negotiations or other actions that involve any of the records cited and that have started before the expiration of the four-year period, then such records must be retained until completion of the actions and resolution of all issues, or the expiration of the four-year period, whichever occurs later.

### c. Client Data

The Recipient shall maintain client data demonstrating client eligibility for services provided. Such data shall include, but not be limited to, client name, address, income level or other basis for determining eligibility, and description of service provided. Such information should be made available to Grantee monitors or their designees for review upon request.

### d. Disclosure

The Recipient understands that client information collected under this Agreement is private and the use or disclosure of such information, when not directly connected with the administration of the Grantee's or Recipient's responsibilities with respect to services provided under this Agreement, is prohibited by the State of Minnesota law, unless written consent is obtained from such person receiving service and, in the case of a minor, that of a responsible parent/ guardian.

### e. Close-outs

The Recipient's obligation to the Grantee shall not end until all close-out requirements are completed. Activities during this close-out period shall include, but are not limited to: making final payments, disposing of program assets (including the return of all unused materials, equipment, unspent cash advances, program income balances, and accounts receivable to the Grantee), and determining the custodianship of records. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the terms of this Agreement shall remain in effect during any period that the Recipient has control over Funds, including program income.

### f. Audits & Inspections

All Recipient records with respect to any matters covered by this Agreement shall be made available to the Grantee, grantor agency, and the Comptroller General of the United States or any of their authorized representatives, at any time during normal business hours, as often as deemed necessary, to audit, examine, and make excerpts or transcripts of all relevant data. Any deficiencies noted in audit reports must be fully cleared by the Recipient within 30 days after receipt by the Recipient. Failure of the Recipient to comply with the above audit requirements will constitute a violation of this Agreement and may result in the withholding of future payments. The Recipient hereby agrees to have an annual agency audit conducted in accordance with current Grantee policy concerning Recipient audits and OMB Circular A-133.

## **VIII. ENTIRE AGREEMENT**

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and supersedes all prior understandings.

## **IX. NOTICES**

Notices required by this Agreement shall be in writing and delivered via email or mail (postage prepaid), or personal delivery. Any notice delivered or sent as aforesaid shall be effective on the date of delivery or sending. All notices and other written communications under this Agreement shall be addressed to the individuals in the capacities indicated below, unless otherwise modified by subsequent written notice.

Communication and details concerning this contract shall be directed at the following contract representatives:

### Grantor

Nancy Bokelmann  
Address: PO Box 3368  
Mankato, MN 56002-3368  
Phone: (507) 387-8623

Email: [nbokelmann@mankatomn.gov](mailto:nbokelmann@mankatomn.gov)

### Recipient

Jenn Echevaria  
Address: 800 Front Street  
Mankato, MN 56001  
Phone: 507-720-6907

Email: [jenn@connectionsshelter.org](mailto:jenn@connectionsshelter.org)

## **X. DATA PRACTICES**

The Recipient shall comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and maintain appropriate data security.

## **XI. SIGNATURES**

The parties have caused this agreement to be executed as of the Effective Date.

**Grantor:** Economic Development Authority of Mankato

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Susan MH Arntz, Executive Director

Date: 05-11-26

**Recipient:**     Connections Shelter

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Jenn Echevaria, Executive Director

Date: 05-12-26

Exhibit A  
Proposal

## Expanded Summer Emergency Shelter Services

### Proposal from Connections Shelter

#### **Executive Summary**

Connections Shelter proposes to expand its existing emergency shelter operations to provide continuous, low-barrier overnight shelter from May 1 through September 30, 2026. This expansion directly addresses the critical gap in summer shelter services and aligns with community goals to reduce unsheltered homelessness and increase access to safe, stable shelter year-round.

Connections will operate a 48-bed overnight shelter from 5:00 PM to 8:00 AM, with a flexible check-in window designed to reflect seasonal needs. While the shelter will open at 5:00 PM to ensure early access for families and individuals with limited alternatives after daytime services close, check-in will remain available later into the evening.

This approach is informed by lessons learned during a five-week pilot partnership with Partners for Housing in summer 2025, which demonstrated increased guest engagement when intake times were better aligned with extended daylight hours. By offering both early access and extended flexibility, Connections is able to meet the diverse needs of shelter guests while reducing barriers to entry.

Grounded in Housing First, harm reduction, and trauma-informed care principles, Connections provides access to shelter without barriers, alongside housing-focused case management and Coordinated Entry participation. With an established facility, experienced staff, and strong community partnerships, Connections is uniquely positioned to implement this expansion immediately and effectively.

This proposal represents a scalable, proven approach that advances the community's goal of transitioning toward a sustainable, year-round shelter model.

#### **1. Organizational Overview**

##### **Organizational Capacity & Experience**

Connections Shelter has a demonstrated track record of providing emergency shelter and supportive services to individuals experiencing homelessness in the Mankato area. Over the past nine years, Connections has grown from a volunteer-run, 25-bed rotating shelter during the coldest months of the year, to a fully autonomous organization with 48 beds, paid and trained staff, and a permanent location, which operates from October to May. The

organization has developed robust operational systems to ensure safety, consistency, and effective service delivery.

Connections has a permanent rental location inside First Presbyterian Church, located at 220 E Hickory Street, where we have operated for 5 years. This location is ready and able to operate continuously for 12 months with no gap in services from our regular service model of October to May. Plans are already in place for any needed repairs to happen during the day, to prevent any overnight closures. Staff is already trained and operating effectively.

Connections Shelter provides:

- Overnight emergency shelter
- Housing-focused case management
- Coordinated Entry participation
- Connections to healthcare, income supports, and community resources

The organization utilizes HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) for data tracking and reporting and maintains established policies and procedures aligned with best practices in shelter operations, as specified in the MN Task Force on Shelter.

In summer 2025, Connections participated in a five-week pilot project with Partners for Housing to provide shelter services during the off-season. This experience provided valuable operational insights, particularly regarding guest engagement and scheduling, that directly inform this proposal.

## **Community Need**

The Mankato area continues to face a significant gap in year-round shelter access, particularly during the summer months when traditional seasonal shelter operations cease. This gap contributes to increased unsheltered homelessness, encampments, and reliance on emergency services.

Individuals experiencing homelessness during the summer face heightened vulnerability, including exposure to extreme weather, lack of access to hygiene facilities, and limited connection to supportive services.

Connections Shelter routinely operates at or near capacity during its regular season, and community need consistently exceeds available resources. The absence of summer shelter options disrupts continuity of care and undermines progress toward housing stability.

Expanding shelter operations through the summer months is a critical step toward building a more responsive, equitable, and effective homeless response system.

## **2. Service Delivery**

### **Service Model**

Connections Shelter operates under a framework grounded in evidence-based best practices:

- **Housing First**

Connections provides immediate access to shelter without preconditions such as sobriety, identification, or criminal background. The primary goal is to stabilize individuals and connect them to resources to address their specific barriers and help them access permanent housing as quickly as possible. We operate from the philosophy that an individual cannot address questions of stability or addiction if they do not have a safe place to sleep.

- **Harm Reduction**

Staff utilize harm reduction strategies to support individuals who may be actively using substances or engaging in high-risk behaviors. The focus is on safety, dignity, and reducing negative outcomes rather than punitive responses. We do this by allowing entry to shelter even if an individual is actively under the influence, as long as they are able to care for themselves and do not demonstrate a danger to themselves or others. We do not allow use of alcohol or substances in shelter. If an individual presents in a condition that will not allow them safe entry to shelter, other resources are contacted if necessary, such as Public Safety for transfer to a detox facility, the Crisis Center, or EMS.

- **Trauma-Informed Care**

All services are delivered through a trauma-informed lens, recognizing the prevalence of trauma among individuals experiencing homelessness. Staff prioritize emotional and physical safety, trust-building, and empowerment. Staff receive regular and ongoing training on trauma-informed care from licensed professionals. All policies and procedures are written from a trauma-informed perspective and are periodically reviewed to maintain up-to-date information

- **Person-Centered & Culturally Responsive Services**

Connections is committed to providing services that are respectful, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse backgrounds and needs of shelter guests. We allow individuals to self-identify their gender and place them in whatever gendered room is most comfortable to them. We also have a flex/non-gendered room that is available for individuals who express gender fluidity and may not be comfortable in either a men's or women's room. The flex room was developed in response to an actual guest's need for a more inclusive and adaptable space within the shelter. It provides a private option that supports guests whose gender identity or presentation may not align with traditional room assignments, ensuring all individuals are treated with dignity while maintaining a comfortable environment for all guests. We do our best to accommodate all individuals to the best of our ability. This flex room can also be used for emergency one-night stays who present to shelter without an assigned bed.

Connections Shelter staff have been specially trained in psychological first aid and trauma-informed practices, specifically as it applies to BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ and other historically marginalized groups, because we know that these groups tend to be over-represented in the unhoused population. Our staff is very diverse, with representation from the LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, and immigrant communities, allowing our guests to feel seen and represented in the staff. If language barriers are an issue, we have accessed translation services when needed and do not let that become a barrier to access.

Additionally, we always have food available for individuals with religious restrictions or allergies, or anyone who may have special dietary needs.

- **Case Management & Coordinated Entry**

Each guest is assigned a Systems Navigator upon entry to shelter. These navigators work with guests one on one to address the individual barriers they are facing and to create a housing-focused plan to help move them toward stability. We provide Coordinated Entry Assessments as part of the navigation plan, with the goal of securing permanent housing and stabilizing income and health supports. Navigators provide referrals as needed to several partner organizations including, but not limited to, Open Door Health Center, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, Adult Mental Health, Partners for Housing and The Salvation Army. These navigators spend multiple evenings each week at shelter to connect with guests in a place they feel safe and provide the necessary case management services. Guests also have the option to connect with navigators during the day at our offices, but it is not required.

Navigators participate in weekly case conferencing with other local and regional providers, as well as street outreach efforts at outside organizations such as Holy Grounds and The Salvation Army.

Investments in enhanced systems navigation services have led to a substantial improvement in housing outcomes, with exits to stable housing increasing from 23 to 70 over the course of a single shelter season. Sustaining shelter operations year-round will build on this success by eliminating seasonal disruptions that often stall or reverse progress toward housing stability.

### **Scope of Services and Operations Plan**

Connections Shelter will continue to operate our 48-bed overnight shelter from May 1<sup>st</sup>, to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, with operations continuing as normal after the contract end-date. Connections has 23 men's beds, 12 women's beds, 4 flex beds, and 9 family beds in 2 family rooms. If we do not have families in shelter, those 9 beds can be re-purposed for additional men or women as needed.

### **Hours of Operation**

- Shelter hours: 5:00 PM – 8:00 AM daily with extended check-in times

This schedule reflects lessons learned from a 2025 summer pilot, during which earlier intake times resulted in lower engagement due to extended daylight hours. An option for a later opening time better aligns with guest needs and increases accessibility.

### **Services Provided**

- Low-barrier shelter access
- Intake and basic needs assessment
- Light meals and snacks in a “grab-and-go” model
- Hygiene supplies and access to restroom facilities and showers
- Safe, supervised sleeping environment with trained, awake overnight staff
- Connection to case management and housing resources

In order to adapt to seasonal needs while maintaining core services, we will not be offering a single hot meal at a fixed time, rather, Connections will provide individually packaged refrigerated and frozen meals available throughout the evening and night, allowing guests to access food when it best meets their schedules and needs. These meals will be provided mainly through a partnership with South Central MN Food Recovery, the Mankato

Moondogs, and other community donations. We also provide a variety of snacks and grab-and-go breakfast items, ensuring that food is always readily available.

### **Site and Facility**

Connections will operate the summer shelter program within its existing shelter facility located at 220 East Hickory Street in Mankato. The site is fully equipped to support overnight shelter operations, including designated sleeping areas, restrooms, showers, and common spaces.

Because the facility is already in use during the regular shelter season, minimal modifications are required to implement the summer expansion. This allows for rapid deployment and cost-effective operation.

### **Staffing Plan**

Connections will continue to implement our current staffing model to support overnight operations:

- Evening Shift (3 staff) 4pm to Midnight: Evening preparation, Intake, guest support, and evening supervision. Navigators are also on site in the evenings providing case management.
- Overnight Shift (2 staff, awake) 11:45pm to 8:15am: Continuous monitoring, safety, and crisis response
- Morning Shift (3 staff) one additional staff from 6am to 10am: Wake-up procedures, guest transitions and cleaning.
- Our staffing policies dictate that there are always at least two staff members at any given time when guests are in the building.

All staff receive training in:

- Trauma-informed care
- De-escalation and crisis response
- Harm reduction strategies
- CPR/First Aid/Narcan
- Shelter policies and procedures
- HMIS data entry and compliance – *this training is for navigators and shelter management, who are entering the data*

All staff receive this training prior to the start of shelter season, with periodic monthly refresher courses. If any additional staff need to be hired for the summer season, training will be offered again.

This staffing model ensures adequate coverage, safety, and service quality while maintaining operational efficiency. Connections has an excellent safety track record and has never had serious injury occur.

### **3. Collaboration and Partnerships**

Connections Shelter maintains strong partnerships with local service providers, including healthcare organizations, outreach teams, and other local homeless response agencies.

Through an ongoing partnership with Open Door Health Clinic and Mayo Clinic Health Systems Residency Program, we host a bi-weekly Shelter Clinic on site, which is open to all shelter guests. In response to this effort to operate year-round, Open Door and Mayo Clinic are both open to continuing Shelter Clinic all summer.

We maintain strong communication with both Partners for Housing and The Salvation Army Mankato in order to collaborate on wrap-around services for our guests. During periods of inclement weather, we have coordinated with The Salvation Army to extend our shelter hours in the morning to prevent a gap in services, as well as with other local organizations such as My Place and LEEP to provide transportation for our guests to the Salvation Army Day Shelter. We also encourage use of the Salvation Army Day Shelter for services like laundry, showers and the noon meal program. We work closely with advocates at Partners for Housing in instances when their non-congregate shelter model would be a better fit for individuals with higher/different needs, particularly families.

As previously mentioned, we utilize South Central MN Food Recovery for meals for our guests, as well as Mankato Moondogs, who generously donate their leftover food after each game.

Through Coordinated Entry participation and ongoing collaboration with the City of Mankato, Blue Earth County and the regional Continuum of Care (CoC), Connections ensures that shelter guests are connected to broader systems of care, including:

- Permanent supportive housing programs

- Mental health and substance use services
- Employment and income supports

These partnerships enhance the effectiveness of shelter services and support long-term housing stability.

#### **4. Racial Equity and Social Justice**

Please see above section for **Person-Centered & Culturally Responsive Services**. In addition to these efforts, we do our best to make accommodations for individuals with mobility limitations. We have an elevator available for guest use, our bathrooms are ADA compliant, and we will place guests in beds nearest to the door for ease of access if necessary.

Connections prioritizes accessibility in both its facility and service delivery. Our team includes staff with lived experience navigating mobility limitations, whose insight helps inform and strengthen accommodations for guests with similar needs.

#### **5. Data Management and Fiscal Systems**

At intake, Connections collects all required HMIS data elements, including participant demographics, prior living situation, income and benefits, disability status, and housing needs. This information supports Coordinated Entry, service planning, and system-wide data tracking.

Data is entered into HMIS within 72 hours of collection, with a standard practice of entering information within 24 hours to ensure timeliness and accuracy. Throughout a participant's stay, staff document services provided, case management interactions, and exits to housing or other destinations. In addition, detailed case notes are maintained in SharePoint on a secure server, ensuring appropriate documentation and confidentiality. This consistent data collection and entry process allows Connections to monitor outcomes, ensure compliance, and contribute to community-wide efforts to address homelessness.

Connections utilizes Jitasa, a nonprofit-focused CPA firm, to manage its financial systems and ensure accurate and compliant accounting practices. A dedicated accountant oversees bookkeeping, reporting, and financial management functions.

The organization adheres to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) through structured internal controls, including segregation of financial responsibilities, timely reconciliations, and routine financial reporting to leadership and the Board of Directors. These practices support transparency, accountability, and strong stewardship of all funding sources. This framework ensures that awarded funds are properly tracked, reported, and used in alignment with all applicable requirements.

Connections has a proven track record of managing state funding, having received support from the State of Minnesota for the past three years. The organization has successfully completed three annual monitoring visits and reviews, consistently demonstrating compliance with programmatic and financial requirements. This experience highlights Connections' capacity to manage large, reimbursable government grants with accuracy, transparency, and accountability, including timely reimbursement requests and detailed financial reporting.

## **6. Budget Narrative**

Connections Shelter's Summer 2026 budget reflects the full cost of operating a 48-bed overnight shelter from June through September, with total projected expenses of \$164,823. The budget is designed to ensure safe, consistent shelter operations while maintaining a focus on accessibility, efficiency, and housing outcomes. The attached budget includes the following categories:

### **Personnel Expenses (\$127,963)**

Personnel costs represent the largest portion of the budget, reflecting the staffing required to safely operate an overnight shelter and provide consistent, high-quality services.

- **Shelter Staff (\$50,378):** Frontline staff provide direct supervision, guest support, intake, and day-to-day operations during evening, overnight, and morning shifts.
- **Shelter Leads (\$17,480):** Lead staff provide on-site supervision, support staff decision-making, and ensure adherence to policies and safety protocols.
- **Shelter Manager and Assistant Manager (\$27,824):** Leadership staff oversee program operations, staffing coordination, compliance, and overall program quality.
- **Shelter Logistics and Onsite Systems Navigation (\$15,642):** These roles support shelter logistics while also providing critical systems navigation services, connecting guests to housing resources, coordinated entry, and community services.
- **Administrative Allocation (\$4,080):** This 10% allocation supports organizational oversight, financial management, and compliance.

Additional personnel-related expenses ensure compliance and staff support:

- **Employee Benefits (\$1,760)**
- **Payroll Taxes (\$6,000)**
- **Payroll Service Fees (\$800)**
- **Workers Compensation (\$4,000)**

This staffing structure ensures adequate coverage across all shifts, supports safety and accountability, and allows for ongoing engagement with guests to promote housing stability.

### **Non-Personnel Expenses (\$17,400)**

Non-personnel costs support the daily needs of shelter operations and ensure guests have access to basic necessities.

- **Supplies (\$3,200):** Includes hygiene items, cleaning supplies, and basic operational materials.
- **Food and Refreshment (\$10,000):** Supports the provision of meals and snacks for shelter guests, using a flexible, on-demand model to increase accessibility.
- **Telephone and Internet (\$1,000):** Ensures communication capacity for staff and access to systems such as HMIS.
- **Technology (\$1,500):** Includes seasonal equipment such as a water cooler to support guest health and comfort during warmer months.
- **Printing, Postage, and Subscriptions (\$1,700 combined):** Supports program communication, documentation, and safety systems (e.g., monitoring and security tools). These expenses ensure that the shelter environment is functional, responsive, and able to meet the day-to-day needs of guests and staff.

### **Facility Expenses (\$14,560)**

Facility costs reflect the use and maintenance of an existing shelter space.

- **Shelter Rent (\$12,880):** Covers the cost of maintaining a dedicated, stable location for shelter operations.
- **Utilities (\$880):** Supports electricity, water, and other essential services.
- **Repairs and Maintenance (\$800):** Ensures the facility remains safe, clean, and operational throughout the program period.

Because Connections utilizes an established shelter site, facility costs remain relatively low while still providing a safe and appropriate environment.

### **Other Program-Specific Expenses (\$1,000)**

These targeted expenses directly support guest access and program integrity:

- **Background Checks (\$200):** Ensures staff and volunteers meet safety requirements.

- **Guest Transportation Assistance (\$800):** Provides limited support for transportation to housing appointments, employment, or other critical services.

#### **Other Expenses (\$3,900)**

These costs support overall program stability and staff effectiveness:

- **Insurance (\$2,200):** Provides necessary liability coverage for program operations.
- **Staff and Volunteer Support (\$500):** Helps maintain staff wellness and retention in a high-demand environment.
- **Professional Development (\$200):** Supports ongoing training in trauma-informed care, de-escalation, and best practices.
- **Miscellaneous Expenses (\$1,000):** Covers unforeseen or variable operational needs.

#### **Sustainability Planning**

Connections Shelter views this summer expansion as a critical step toward a sustainable, year-round shelter model. To support long-term operations beyond this funding period, the organization is actively implementing a multi-pronged sustainability strategy.

This includes a large-scale community matching campaign (365 Match Campaign) designed to generate new and increased private donations to sustain year-round shelter operations. Early engagement indicates strong community support for maintaining continuous shelter access.

In addition, Connections is in ongoing discussions with the State of Minnesota to explore increased funding allocations in the next biennium, beginning in July of 2027. These conversations reflect growing recognition of the need for expanded, consistent shelter capacity at the state level.

Connections will also continue to pursue a diversified funding strategy, including grants, local government support, and private philanthropy, to ensure long-term program stability. By combining immediate funding with strategic long-term planning, Connections is working to ensure that shelter services remain consistent, effective, and responsive to community need beyond the summer months.

| CONNECTIONS SHELTER PROJECTED SUMMER ONLY BUDGET (Current Hours)     |                         |                         |                           |                              |                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| EXPENSES                                                             |                         |                         |                           |                              |                            |
|                                                                      | June<br>(2 pay periods) | July<br>(2 pay periods) | August<br>(2 pay periods) | September<br>(2 pay periods) | Total 2026 Summer Expenses |
| <b>SALARIES AND RELATED EXPENSES</b>                                 |                         |                         |                           |                              |                            |
| Salaries and Wages - Shelter Staff                                   | \$12,594.40             | \$12,594.40             | \$12,594.40               | \$12,594.40                  | \$50,378                   |
| Salaries and Wages - Shelter Leads                                   | \$4,370.00              | \$4,370.00              | \$4,370.00                | \$4,370.00                   | \$17,480                   |
| Salaries and Wages - Shelter Manager and Assistant Manager           | \$6,955.94              | \$6,955.94              | \$6,955.94                | \$6,955.94                   | \$27,824                   |
| Salaries and Wages - Shelter Logistics and Onsite Systems Navigation | \$3,910.40              | \$3,910.40              | \$3,910.40                | \$3,910.40                   | \$15,642                   |
| Salaries and Wages - Management (10% Administration)                 | \$1,020.00              | \$1,020.00              | \$1,020.00                | \$1,020.00                   | \$4,080                    |
| Employee Benefits                                                    | \$440.00                | \$440.00                | \$440.00                  | \$440.00                     | \$1,760                    |
| Payroll Taxes                                                        | \$1,500.00              | \$1,500.00              | \$1,500.00                | \$1,500.00                   | \$6,000                    |
| Payroll Service Fees                                                 | \$200.00                | \$200.00                | \$200.00                  | \$200.00                     | \$800                      |
| Workers Comp                                                         | \$1,000.00              | \$1,000.00              | \$1,000.00                | \$1,000.00                   | \$4,000                    |
| <b>TOTAL SALARIES AND WAGES</b>                                      | <b>\$31,991</b>         | <b>\$31,991</b>         | <b>\$31,991</b>           | <b>\$31,991</b>              | <b>\$127,963</b>           |
| <b>NONPERSONNEL EXPENSES</b>                                         |                         |                         |                           |                              |                            |
| Supplies                                                             | \$800                   | \$800                   | \$800                     | \$800                        | \$3,200                    |
| Food and Refreshment                                                 | \$2,500                 | \$2,500                 | \$2,500                   | \$2,500                      | \$10,000                   |
| Telephone and Internet                                               | \$250                   | \$250                   | \$250                     | \$250                        | \$1,000                    |
| Postage and Shipping                                                 | \$25                    | \$25                    | \$25                      | \$25                         | \$100                      |
| Equipment Rental                                                     | \$0                     | \$0                     | \$0                       | \$0                          | \$0                        |
| Software and Hardware                                                | \$0                     | \$0                     | \$0                       | \$0                          | \$0                        |
| Technology                                                           | \$375                   | \$375                   | \$375                     | \$375                        | \$1,500                    |
| Printing and Copying                                                 | \$100                   | \$100                   | \$100                     | \$100                        | \$400                      |
| Subscriptions (TV, Ring, Etc)                                        | \$300                   | \$300                   | \$300                     | \$300                        | \$1,200                    |
| <b>NONPERSONNEL EXPENSES TOTAL</b>                                   | <b>\$4,350</b>          | <b>\$4,350</b>          | <b>\$4,350</b>            | <b>\$4,350</b>               | <b>\$17,400</b>            |
| <b>FACILITY EXPENSES</b>                                             |                         |                         |                           |                              |                            |
| Shelter Rent                                                         | \$3,220                 | \$3,220                 | \$3,220                   | \$3,220                      | \$12,880                   |
| Utilities                                                            | \$220                   | \$220                   | \$220                     | \$220                        | \$880                      |
| Repairs and Maintenance                                              | \$200                   | \$200                   | \$200                     | \$200                        | \$800                      |
| <b>FACILITY EXPENSES TOTAL</b>                                       | <b>\$3,640</b>          | <b>\$3,640</b>          | <b>\$3,640</b>            | <b>\$3,640</b>               | <b>\$14,560</b>            |
| <b>OTHER PROGRAM SPECIFIC EXPENSES</b>                               |                         |                         |                           |                              |                            |
| Background Check                                                     | \$50                    | \$50                    | \$50                      | \$50                         | \$200                      |
| Guest Assistance - Transportation                                    | \$200                   | \$200                   | \$200                     | \$200                        | \$800                      |
| <b>OTHER PROGRAM EXPENSES TOTAL</b>                                  | <b>\$250</b>            | <b>\$250</b>            | <b>\$250</b>              | <b>\$250</b>                 | <b>\$1,000</b>             |
| <b>OTHER EXPENSES</b>                                                |                         |                         |                           |                              |                            |
| Insurance - Non Employee Related                                     | \$550                   | \$550                   | \$550                     | \$550                        | \$2,200                    |
| Staff and Volunteer Support                                          | \$125                   | \$125                   | \$125                     | \$125                        | \$500                      |
| Professional Development - Staff Training                            | \$50                    | \$50                    | \$50                      | \$50                         | \$200                      |
| Other Expenses                                                       | \$250                   | \$250                   | \$250                     | \$250                        | \$1,000                    |
| <b>OTHER EXPENSES TOTAL</b>                                          | <b>\$975</b>            | <b>\$975</b>            | <b>\$975</b>              | <b>\$975</b>                 | <b>\$3,900</b>             |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>                                                | <b>\$41,206</b>         | <b>\$41,206</b>         | <b>\$41,206</b>           | <b>\$41,206</b>              | <b>\$164,823</b>           |

(Water Cooler from Culligan for Summer)



# CERTIFICATE OF LIABILITY INSURANCE

DATE (MM/DD/YYYY)

12/31/2025

THIS CERTIFICATE IS ISSUED AS A MATTER OF INFORMATION ONLY AND CONFERS NO RIGHTS UPON THE CERTIFICATE HOLDER. THIS CERTIFICATE DOES NOT AFFIRMATIVELY OR NEGATIVELY AMEND, EXTEND OR ALTER THE COVERAGE AFFORDED BY THE POLICIES BELOW. THIS CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE ISSUING INSURER(S), AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE OR PRODUCER, AND THE CERTIFICATE HOLDER.

**IMPORTANT:** If the certificate holder is an **ADDITIONAL INSURED**, the policy(ies) must have **ADDITIONAL INSURED** provisions or be endorsed. If **SUBROGATION IS WAIVED**, subject to the terms and conditions of the policy, certain policies may require an endorsement. A statement on this certificate does not confer rights to the certificate holder in lieu of such endorsement(s).

|                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>PRODUCER</b><br>Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I.<br>3000 Schuster Lane<br>P.O. Box 357<br>Merrill WI 54452 | <b>CONTACT</b><br><b>NAME:</b> Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I.<br><b>PHONE</b><br>(A/C, No. Ext): 1-800-554-2642<br><b>FAX</b><br>(A/C, No): 855-264-2329<br><b>E-MAIL</b><br><b>ADDRESS:</b> customerservice@churchmutual.com |
| <b>INSURED</b><br>CONNECTIONS MINISTRY<br><br>800 S FRONT ST<br><br>MANKATO MN 56001-2401                          | <b>INSURER(S) AFFORDING COVERAGE</b><br><b>INSURER A:</b> Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I.<br><b>INSURER B:</b><br><b>INSURER C:</b><br><b>INSURER D:</b><br><b>INSURER E:</b><br><b>INSURER F:</b>                             |
|                                                                                                                    | <b>NAIC #</b><br>18767                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

**COVERAGES****CERTIFICATE NUMBER:****REVISION NUMBER:**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE POLICIES OF INSURANCE LISTED BELOW HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO THE INSURED NAMED ABOVE FOR THE POLICY PERIOD INDICATED. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY REQUIREMENT, TERM OR CONDITION OF ANY CONTRACT OR OTHER DOCUMENT WITH RESPECT TO WHICH THIS CERTIFICATE MAY BE ISSUED OR MAY PERTAIN, THE INSURANCE AFFORDED BY THE POLICIES DESCRIBED HEREIN IS SUBJECT TO ALL THE TERMS, EXCLUSIONS AND CONDITIONS OF SUCH POLICIES. LIMITS SHOWN MAY HAVE BEEN REDUCED BY PAID CLAIMS.

| INSR LTR | TYPE OF INSURANCE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | ADDL INSD                         | SUBR WVD | POLICY NUMBER     | POLICY EFF (MM/DD/YYYY) | POLICY EXP (MM/DD/YYYY) | LIMITS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>COMMERCIAL GENERAL LIABILITY</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> CLAIMS-MADE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUR<br><br>GEN'L AGGREGATE LIMIT APPLIES PER:<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLICY <input type="checkbox"/> PRO-JECT <input type="checkbox"/> LOC<br>OTHER: | Y                                 |          | 0355524 25-893763 | 07/01/2025              | 07/01/2026              | EACH OCCURRENCE \$ 1,000,000<br>DAMAGE TO RENTED PREMISES (Ea occurrence) \$ 1,000,000<br>MED EXP (Any one person) \$ 10,000<br>PERSONAL & ADV INJURY \$ 1,000,000<br>GENERAL AGGREGATE \$ 3,000,000<br>PRODUCTS - COMP/OP AGG \$ 1,000,000<br>\$ |
|          | <b>AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> ANY AUTO<br><input type="checkbox"/> OWNED AUTOS ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> SCHEDULED AUTOS<br><input type="checkbox"/> HIRED AUTOS ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> NON-OWNED AUTOS ONLY                                                                          |                                   |          |                   |                         |                         | COMBINED SINGLE LIMIT (Ea accident) \$<br>BODILY INJURY (Per person) \$<br>BODILY INJURY (Per accident) \$<br>PROPERTY DAMAGE (Per accident) \$<br>\$                                                                                             |
|          | <b>UMBRELLA LIAB</b> <input type="checkbox"/> OCCUR<br><b>EXCESS LIAB</b> <input type="checkbox"/> CLAIMS-MADE<br>DED <input type="checkbox"/> RETENTION \$                                                                                                                                                                |                                   |          |                   |                         |                         | EACH OCCURRENCE \$<br>AGGREGATE \$<br>\$                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|          | <b>WORKERS COMPENSATION AND EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY</b><br>ANY PROPRIETOR/PARTNER/EXECUTIVE OFFICER/MEMBER EXCLUDED? (Mandatory in NH)<br>If yes, describe under DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS below                                                                                                                              | Y / N<br><input type="checkbox"/> | N / A    |                   |                         |                         | PER STATUTE <input type="checkbox"/> OTH-ER <input type="checkbox"/><br>E.L. EACH ACCIDENT \$<br>E.L. DISEASE - EA EMPLOYEE \$<br>E.L. DISEASE - POLICY LIMIT \$                                                                                  |
| A        | Sexual Misconduct                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                   |          | 0355524 25-893763 | 07/01/2025              | 07/01/2026              | Occurrence Limit \$300,000<br>Aggregate Limit \$300,000                                                                                                                                                                                           |

**DESCRIPTION OF OPERATIONS / LOCATIONS / VEHICLES (ACORD 101, Additional Remarks Schedule, may be attached if more space is required)**

Certificate Holder is an additional insured as required by written contract or agreement per the General Liability Enhancement endorsement attached to the policy.

**CERTIFICATE HOLDER****CANCELLATION**

|                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Minnesota Department of Human Services Administration<br>on Homelessness, Housing and Support Services<br>540 Cedar St<br>St Paul MN 55101 | <b>SHOULD ANY OF THE ABOVE DESCRIBED POLICIES BE CANCELLED BEFORE THE EXPIRATION DATE THEREOF, NOTICE WILL BE DELIVERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY PROVISIONS.</b><br><br><b>AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE</b><br> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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## Expanded Summer Emergency Shelter Services

### Proposal from Connections Shelter

#### **Executive Summary**

Connections Shelter proposes to expand its existing emergency shelter operations to provide continuous, low-barrier overnight shelter from May 1 through September 30, 2026. This expansion directly addresses the critical gap in summer shelter services and aligns with community goals to reduce unsheltered homelessness and increase access to safe, stable shelter year-round.

Connections will operate a 48-bed overnight shelter from 5:00 PM to 8:00 AM, with a flexible check-in window designed to reflect seasonal needs. While the shelter will open at 5:00 PM to ensure early access for families and individuals with limited alternatives after daytime services close, check-in will remain available later into the evening.

This approach is informed by lessons learned during a five-week pilot partnership with Partners for Housing in summer 2025, which demonstrated increased guest engagement when intake times were better aligned with extended daylight hours. By offering both early access and extended flexibility, Connections is able to meet the diverse needs of shelter guests while reducing barriers to entry.

Grounded in Housing First, harm reduction, and trauma-informed care principles, Connections provides access to shelter without barriers, alongside housing-focused case management and Coordinated Entry participation. With an established facility, experienced staff, and strong community partnerships, Connections is uniquely positioned to implement this expansion immediately and effectively.

Connections operates both overnight shelter services and a separate drop-in center. These services are closely connected; however this request is focused exclusively on shelter operations. All proposed activities and associated funding are dedicated solely to supporting overnight shelter services. The Connections Drop-in Center continues to operate year-round and its funding is not tied to this proposal.

This proposal represents a scalable, proven approach that advances the community's goal of transitioning toward a sustainable, year-round shelter model.

#### **1. Organizational Overview**

##### **Organizational Capacity & Experience**

Connections Shelter has a demonstrated track record of providing emergency shelter and supportive services to individuals experiencing homelessness in the Mankato area. Over the past nine years, Connections has grown from a volunteer-run, 25-bed rotating shelter during the coldest months of the year, to a fully autonomous organization with 48 beds, paid and trained staff, and a permanent location, which operates typically from October 1st to May 1<sup>st</sup>, depending on funding. The organization has developed robust operational systems to ensure safety, consistency, and effective service delivery.

Connections has a permanent rental location inside First Presbyterian Church, located at 220 E Hickory Street, where we have operated for 5 years. This location is ready and able to operate continuously for 12 months with no gap in services from our regular service model of October 1st to May 1st. Plans are already in place for any needed repairs to happen during the day, to prevent any overnight closures. Staff is already trained and operating effectively.

Connections Shelter provides:

- Overnight emergency shelter
- Housing-focused case management
- Coordinated Entry participation
- Connections to healthcare, income supports, and community resources

The organization utilizes HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) for data tracking and reporting and maintains established policies and procedures aligned with best practices in shelter operations, as specified in the MN Task Force on Shelter.

In summer 2025, Connections participated in a five-week pilot project with Partners for Housing to provide shelter services during the off-season. This experience provided valuable operational insights, particularly regarding guest engagement and scheduling, that directly inform this proposal.

## **Community Need**

The Mankato area continues to face a significant gap in year-round shelter access, particularly during the summer months when traditional seasonal shelter operations cease. This gap contributes to increased unsheltered homelessness, encampments, and reliance on emergency services.

Individuals experiencing homelessness during the summer face heightened vulnerability, including exposure to extreme weather, lack of access to hygiene facilities, and limited connection to supportive services.

Connections Shelter routinely operates at or near capacity during its regular season, and community need consistently exceeds available resources. The absence of summer shelter options disrupts continuity of care and undermines progress toward housing stability.

Expanding shelter operations through the summer months is a critical step toward building a more responsive, equitable, and effective homeless response system.

## **2. Service Delivery**

### **Service Model**

Connections Shelter operates under a framework grounded in evidence-based best practices:

- **Housing First**

Connections provides immediate access to shelter without preconditions such as sobriety, identification, or criminal background. The primary goal is to stabilize individuals and connect them to resources to address their specific barriers and help them access permanent housing as quickly as possible. We operate from the philosophy that an individual cannot address questions of stability or addiction if they do not have a safe place to sleep.

- **Harm Reduction**

Staff utilize harm reduction strategies to support individuals who may be actively using substances or engaging in high-risk behaviors. The focus is on safety, dignity, and reducing negative outcomes rather than punitive responses. We do this by allowing entry to shelter even if an individual is actively under the influence, as long as they are able to care for themselves and do not demonstrate a danger to themselves or others. We do not allow use of alcohol or substances in shelter. If an individual presents in a condition that will not allow them safe entry to shelter, other resources are contacted if necessary, such as Public Safety for transfer to a detox facility, the Crisis Center, or EMS.

- **Trauma-Informed Care**

All services are delivered through a trauma-informed lens, recognizing the prevalence of trauma among individuals experiencing homelessness. Staff prioritize emotional and physical safety, trust-building, and empowerment. Staff receive regular and ongoing training on trauma-informed care from licensed professionals. All policies and procedures are written from a trauma-informed perspective and are periodically reviewed to maintain up-to-date information

- **Person-Centered & Culturally Responsive Services**

Connections is committed to providing services that are respectful, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse backgrounds and needs of shelter guests. We allow individuals to self-identify their gender and place them in whatever gendered room is most comfortable to them. We also have a flex/non-gendered room that is available for individuals who express gender fluidity and may not be comfortable in either a men's or women's room. The flex room was developed in response to an actual guest's need for a more inclusive and adaptable space within the shelter. It provides a private option that supports guests whose gender identity or presentation may not align with traditional room assignments, ensuring all individuals are treated with dignity while maintaining a comfortable environment for all guests. We do our best to accommodate all individuals to the best of our ability. This flex room can also be used for emergency one-night stays who present to shelter without an assigned bed.

Connections Shelter staff have been specially trained in psychological first aid and trauma-informed practices, specifically as it applies to BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ and other historically marginalized groups, because we know that these groups tend to be over-represented in the unhoused population. Our staff is very diverse, with representation from the LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, and immigrant communities, allowing our guests to feel seen and represented in the staff. If language barriers are an issue, we have accessed translation services when needed and do not let that become a barrier to access.

Additionally, we always have food available for individuals with religious restrictions or allergies, or anyone who may have special dietary needs.

- **Case Management & Coordinated Entry**

Each guest is assigned a Systems Navigator upon entry to shelter. These navigators work with guests one on one to address the individual barriers they are facing and to create a housing-focused plan to help move them toward stability. We provide Coordinated Entry Assessments as part of the navigation plan, with the goal of securing permanent housing and stabilizing income and health supports. Navigators provide referrals as needed to several partner organizations including, but not limited to, Open Door Health Center,

Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, Adult Mental Health, Partners for Housing and The Salvation Army. These navigators spend multiple evenings each week at shelter to connect with guests in a place they feel safe and provide the necessary case management services. Guests also have the option to connect with navigators during the day at our offices, but it is not required.

Navigators participate in weekly case conferencing with other local and regional providers, as well as street outreach efforts at outside organizations such as Holy Grounds and The Salvation Army.

Investments in enhanced systems navigation services have led to a substantial improvement in housing outcomes, with exits to stable housing increasing from 23 to 70 over the course of a single shelter season. Sustaining shelter operations year-round will build on this success by eliminating seasonal disruptions that often stall or reverse progress toward housing stability.

### **Scope of Services and Operations Plan**

Connections Shelter will continue to operate our 48-bed overnight shelter from May 1<sup>st</sup>, to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026, with operations continuing as normal after the contract end-date. Connections has 23 men's beds, 12 women's beds, 4 flex beds, and 9 family beds in 2 family rooms. If we do not have families in shelter, those 9 beds can be re-purposed for additional men or women as needed. Guests will continue to be offered a bed for up to 30 days with the option to extend based on navigation goals. This is a change from the summer 2025 pilot project of emergency night by night beds, and direct feedback from those with lived experience of homelessness.

### **Hours of Operation**

- Shelter hours: 5:00 PM – 8:00 AM daily with extended check-in times

This schedule reflects lessons learned from a 2025 summer pilot, during which earlier intake times resulted in lower engagement due to extended daylight hours. An option for a later opening time better aligns with guest needs and increases accessibility.

### **Services Provided**

- Low-barrier shelter access
- Intake and basic needs assessment
- Light meals and snacks in a “grab-and-go” model
- Hygiene supplies and access to restroom facilities and showers

- Safe, supervised sleeping environment with trained, awake overnight staff
- Connection to case management and housing resources

In order to adapt to seasonal needs while maintaining core services, we will not be offering a single hot meal at a fixed time, rather, Connections will provide individually packaged refrigerated and frozen meals available throughout the evening and night, allowing guests to access food when it best meets their schedules and needs. These meals will be provided mainly through a partnership with South Central MN Food Recovery, the Mankato Moondogs, and other community donations. We also provide a variety of snacks and grab-and-go breakfast items, ensuring that food is always readily available.

### **Site and Facility**

Connections will operate the summer shelter program within its existing shelter facility located at 220 East Hickory Street in Mankato. The site is fully equipped to support overnight shelter operations, including designated sleeping areas, restrooms, showers, and common spaces.

Because the facility is already in use during the regular shelter season, minimal modifications are required to implement the summer expansion. This allows for rapid deployment and cost-effective operation.

### **Staffing Plan**

Connections will continue to implement our current staffing model to support overnight operations:

- Evening Shift (3 staff) 4pm to Midnight: Evening preparation, Intake, guest support, and evening supervision. Navigators are also on site in the evenings providing case management.
- Overnight Shift (2 staff, awake) 11:45pm to 8:15am: Continuous monitoring, safety, and crisis response
- Morning Shift (3 staff) one additional staff from 6am to 10am: Wake-up procedures, guest transitions and cleaning.
- Our staffing policies dictate that there are always at least two staff members at any given time when guests are in the building.

All staff receive training in:

- Trauma-informed care

- De-escalation and crisis response
- Harm reduction strategies
- CPR/First Aid/Narcan
- Shelter policies and procedures
- HMIS data entry and compliance – *this training is for navigators and shelter management, who are entering the data*

All staff receive this training prior to the start of shelter season, with periodic monthly refresher courses. If any additional staff need to be hired for the summer season, training will be offered again.

This staffing model ensures adequate coverage, safety, and service quality while maintaining operational efficiency. Connections has an excellent safety track record and has never had serious injury occur.

### **3. Collaboration and Partnerships**

Connections Shelter maintains strong partnerships with local service providers, including healthcare organizations, outreach teams, and other local homeless response agencies.

Through an ongoing partnership with Open Door Health Clinic and Mayo Clinic Health Systems Residency Program, we host a bi-weekly Shelter Clinic on site, which is open to all shelter guests. In response to this effort to operate year-round, Open Door and Mayo Clinic are both open to continuing Shelter Clinic all summer.

We maintain strong communication with both Partners for Housing and The Salvation Army Mankato in order to collaborate on wrap-around services for our guests. During periods of inclement weather, we have coordinated with The Salvation Army to extend our shelter hours in the morning to prevent a gap in services, as well as with other local organizations such as My Place and LEEP to provide transportation for our guests to the Salvation Army Day Shelter. We also encourage use of the Salvation Army Day Shelter for services like laundry, showers and the noon meal program. We work closely with advocates at Partners for Housing in instances when their non-congregate shelter model would be a better fit for individuals with higher/different needs, particularly families.

As previously mentioned, we utilize South Central MN Food Recovery for meals for our guests, as well as Mankato Moondogs, who generously donate their leftover food after each game. These donations are primarily geared toward providing dinner, with occasional donations of snacks or fresh fruits and vegetables.

Through Coordinated Entry participation and ongoing collaboration with the City of Mankato, Blue Earth County and the regional Continuum of Care (CoC), Connections ensures that shelter guests are connected to broader systems of care, including:

- Permanent supportive housing programs
- Mental health and substance use services
- Employment and income supports

These partnerships enhance the effectiveness of shelter services and support long-term housing stability.

#### **4. Racial Equity and Social Justice**

Please see above section for **Person-Centered & Culturally Responsive Services**. In addition to these efforts, we do our best to make accommodations for individuals with mobility limitations. We have an elevator available for guest use, our bathrooms are ADA compliant, and we will place guests in beds nearest to the door for ease of access if necessary.

Connections prioritizes accessibility in both its facility and service delivery. Our team includes staff with lived experience navigating mobility limitations, whose insight helps inform and strengthen accommodations for guests with similar needs.

#### **5. Data Management and Fiscal Systems**

At intake, Connections collects all required HMIS data elements, including participant demographics, prior living situation, income and benefits, disability status, and housing needs. This information supports Coordinated Entry, service planning, and system-wide data tracking.

Data is entered into HMIS within 72 hours of collection, with a standard practice of entering information within 24 hours to ensure timeliness and accuracy. Throughout a participant's stay, staff document services provided, case management interactions, and exits to

housing or other destinations. In addition, detailed case notes are maintained in SharePoint on a secure server, ensuring appropriate documentation and confidentiality. This consistent data collection and entry process allows Connections to monitor outcomes, ensure compliance, and contribute to community-wide efforts to address homelessness.

Connections utilizes Jitasa, a nonprofit-focused CPA firm, to manage its financial systems and ensure accurate and compliant accounting practices. A dedicated accountant oversees bookkeeping, reporting, and financial management functions.

The organization adheres to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) through structured internal controls, including segregation of financial responsibilities, timely reconciliations, and routine financial reporting to leadership and the Board of Directors. These practices support transparency, accountability, and strong stewardship of all funding sources. This framework ensures that awarded funds are properly tracked, reported, and used in alignment with all applicable requirements.

Connections has a proven track record of managing state funding, having received support from the State of Minnesota for the past three years. The organization has successfully completed three annual monitoring visits and reviews, consistently demonstrating compliance with programmatic and financial requirements. This experience highlights Connections' capacity to manage large, reimbursable government grants with accuracy, transparency, and accountability, including timely reimbursement requests and detailed financial reporting.

## **6. Budget Narrative**

Connections Shelter's Summer 2026 budget reflects the full cost of operating a 48-bed overnight shelter from June through September, with total projected expenses of \$164,823. The budget is designed to ensure safe, consistent shelter operations while maintaining a focus on accessibility, efficiency, and housing outcomes. We have secured \$10,000 in CDBG funds specifically for expansion of summer services, which will be reimbursable after we transition to the summer shelter season.

Connections operates both shelter services and a separate daytime drop-in center; however, the activities outlined in this proposal are exclusively related to overnight shelter operations. Shelter services include overnight accommodation, supervision, intake, meals, and housing-focused support provided within the shelter facilities during operational hours.

Drop-in Center services – such as daytime access, resource navigation, and basic needs support – are operated separately and are not included in this proposal or associated budget. The only overlap is that some intake appointments for incoming shelter guests may take place at the drop-in center during the daytime hours, allowing individuals to meet with navigators in advance of the shelter entry. These appointments support shelter access and do not represent a separate program cost.

This distinction ensures that all requested funds are dedicated to solely expanding overnight shelter capacity and services.

The majority of our expenses are increased staffing costs, reflected in the Personnel Expenses category. However, there are additional operating expenses of approximately \$40,000 reflected in this proposal that are allocated to costs directly supporting shelter operations, and include non-personnel, facility and program-related costs necessary to safely and effectively operate the shelter. Operational funding is largely directed toward direct-to-guest services that support the daily functioning of the shelter. These expenses include cleaning supplies to maintain sanitary conditions, paper products such as toilet paper and paper towels, as well as materials needed to complete intake and documentation processes for guests.

As we have not operated year-round yet, these costs are an estimate based on our regular monthly expenses. The \$10,000 for food costs is an estimate and is primarily intended to cover snacks and breakfast items for shelter guests. While Connections anticipates that most evening meal needs will be met through community donations, this amount includes a buffer in the event that additional purchases are necessary. As with all estimated expenditures listed, Connections will only request reimbursement for actual expenses incurred.

The attached budget includes the following categories:

**Personnel Expenses (\$127,963)**

Personnel costs represent the largest portion of the budget, reflecting the staffing required to safely operate an overnight shelter and provide consistent, high-quality services.

- **Shelter Staff (\$50,378):** Frontline staff provide direct supervision, guest support, intake, and day-to-day operations during evening, overnight, and morning shifts. This consists of an average of 364 staff hours per pay period of 10 part-time shelter staff at an average pay rate of \$17.30/hr.

- **Shelter Leads (\$17,480):** Lead staff provide on-site supervision, support staff decision-making, and ensure adherence to policies and safety protocols. We have two part-time shelter leads, beyond our manager and assistant manager, who account for an average of 115 hours a pay period at an average pay rate of \$19.00/hr.
- **Shelter Manager and Assistant Manager (\$27,824):** Leadership staff oversee program operations, staffing coordination, compliance, and overall program quality. Our shelter manager is FT with an annual salary of \$45,427/yr + fringe, our assistant manager is FT with an annual salary of \$45,000/yr + fringe and also tracks HMIS entry for shelter guests.
- **Shelter Logistics and Onsite Systems Navigation (\$15,642):** These roles support shelter logistics while also providing critical systems navigation services, connecting guests to housing resources, coordinated entry, and community services. These numbers represent .5 time of our FT logistics coordinator (\$49,753/yr + fringe), and .5 time of our FT outreach coordinator (\$24.96/hr) respectively. This is an accurate representation of shelter-direct services, logistics and systems navigation provided, *apart from regular drop-In support*. This includes time at shelter, food and supply deliveries, HMIS and case notes, housing supports and more. Our FT social worker also does shelter-direct systems navigation, but her position is funded through our State of Minnesota Emergency Services Provider Grant and as a result her time is not part of this budget though her work will also be essential at shelter.
- **Administrative Allocation (\$4,080):** This 10% allocation supports organizational oversight, financial management, and compliance. This is a combined total of 10% of both the Executive Director (\$72,800/yr) and the Director of Development (\$59,800/yr) who serve as on call leadership support for shelter. In addition, this covers the hours managing staff training, payroll, grant reimbursement and receipts tracking, and other staff supervision or direct shelter support needed. It represents approximately 8 hours per pay period.

Additional personnel-related expenses ensure compliance and staff support:

- **Employee Benefits (\$1,760)**
- **Payroll Taxes (\$6,000)**
- **Payroll Service Fees (\$800)**
- **Workers Compensation (\$4,000)**

This staffing structure ensures adequate coverage across all shifts, supports safety and accountability, and allows for ongoing engagement with guests to promote housing stability.

## **Non-Personnel Expenses (\$17,400)**

Non-personnel costs support the daily needs of shelter operations and ensure guests have access to basic necessities.

- **Supplies (\$3,200):** Includes hygiene items, cleaning supplies, and basic operational materials.
- **Food and Refreshment (\$10,000):** Supports the provision of meals and snacks for shelter guests, using a flexible, on-demand model to increase accessibility.
- **Telephone and Internet (\$1,000):** Ensures communication capacity for staff and access to systems such as HMIS.
- **Technology (\$1,500):** Includes seasonal equipment such as a water cooler and extra fans to support guest health and comfort during warmer months.
- **Printing, Postage, and Subscriptions (\$1,700 combined):** Supports program communication, documentation, and safety systems (e.g., monitoring and security tools). These expenses ensure that the shelter environment is functional, responsive, and able to meet the day-to-day needs of guests and staff.

#### **Facility Expenses (\$14,560)**

Facility costs reflect the use and maintenance of an existing shelter space.

- **Shelter Rent (\$12,880):** Connections maintains a 12-month lease on its shelter facility, making rent an ongoing fixed cost regardless of seasonal programming. As such, including this expense in the summer budget reflects the true cost of operating the shelter, ensuring an accurate representation of program costs.
- **Utilities (\$880):** Supports electricity, water, and other essential services. These expenses would not typically be incurred during the summer months in the absence of shelter operations.
- **Repairs and Maintenance (\$800):** Ensures the facility remains safe, clean, and operational throughout the program period.  
Because Connections utilizes an established shelter site, facility costs remain relatively low while still providing a safe and appropriate environment.

#### **Other Program-Specific Expenses (\$1,000)**

These targeted expenses directly support guest access and program integrity:

- **Background Checks (\$200):** Ensures staff and volunteers meet safety requirements.
- **Guest Transportation Assistance (\$800):** Provides limited support for transportation to housing appointments, employment, or other critical services.

#### **Other Expenses (\$3,900)**

These costs support overall program stability and staff effectiveness:

- **Insurance (\$2,200):** Provides necessary liability coverage for program operations.

- **Staff and Volunteer Support (\$500):** Helps maintain staff wellness and retention in a high-demand environment.
- **Professional Development (\$200):** Supports ongoing training in trauma-informed care, de-escalation, and best practices.
- **Miscellaneous Expenses (\$1,000):** Covers unforeseen or variable operational needs.

### **Sustainability Planning**

Connections Shelter views this summer expansion as a critical step toward a sustainable, year-round shelter model. To support long-term operations beyond this funding period, the organization is actively implementing a multi-pronged sustainability strategy.

This includes a large-scale community matching campaign (365 Match Campaign) designed to generate new and increased private donations to sustain year-round shelter operations. Early engagement indicates strong community support for maintaining continuous shelter access.

Our 365 Match Campaign represents a goal to establish year-round sustainability beyond the need for the Housing Trust Fund in years to come. While funding this year's summer services is included in focus of this proposal, the main goal of the 365 match campaign is to ensure that the full year of shelter remains strong, stable and able to meet the needs of the community.

At this time, we have \$35,000 in matching funds available, which have raised approximately \$10,000 in the first week of our campaign, for a start of \$45,000 of our total \$200,000 ultimate goal. We are waiting to hear from a grantor about another \$35,000 match, a number that they proposed to us, and should hear about that next month.

Also, Connections continues to explore other means of sustainable funding. We've increased our 2027 allocation request to the Greater Mankato Area United Way to \$50,000 and meet with their impact team on March 31, 2026. We continue to seek funding from our grantors such as the Mankato Area Foundation, Hickory Tech, Mayo Foundation, Mardag Foundation, L&N Andreas Foundation, Glen Taylor Foundation, and more.

In addition, Connections is in ongoing discussions with the State of Minnesota to explore increased funding allocations in the next biennium, beginning in July of 2027. These conversations reflect growing recognition of the need for expanded, consistent shelter capacity at the state level.

Connections will also continue to pursue a diversified funding strategy, including grants, local government support, and private philanthropy, to ensure long-term program stability. By combining immediate funding with strategic long-term planning, Connections is working to ensure that shelter services remain consistent, effective, and responsive to community need beyond the summer months.

## **7. Projected Outcomes**

Expanding shelter operations through the summer months will create continuity of care for individuals experiencing homelessness, allowing guests to remain engaged in services without disruption. By eliminating the season gap in shelter access, Connections anticipates improved housing outcomes as individuals are able to maintain forward progress toward stability rather than restarting services in the fall.

Demand for shelter services in the community remains high. Connections was at full capacity at the time of seasonal closure in early May 2025, indicating an ongoing need for consistent access to shelter. During the limited five-week pilot program last summer, utilization was lower than expected, which is attributed to the gap in services prior to re-opening – many individuals had already dispersed or sought alternative arrangements – as well as the emergency, night by night model. Providing continuous shelter access will reduce this disruption and support more consistent engagement.

Connections has already seen measurable growth in both service utilization and housing outcomes. We have seen increase in applications for shelter since the previous year – last season 325 individuals applied for shelter, as opposed to 412 individuals so far this season. It should be noted that not everyone who applies for shelter ends up needing it.

In the current season, the shelter has served 222 individuals, an increase from 160 the previous season. Additionally, 62 individuals have exited to stable housing so far this year, reflecting the effectiveness of enhanced systems navigation and housing-focused services. Maintaining operations through the summer is expected to further increase these outcomes by allowing uninterrupted engagement in housing pathways.

Beyond individual outcomes, year-round shelter operations are expected to positively impact the broader community. Consistent access to shelter can reduce reliance on emergency and public safety services, decrease the prevalence of unsheltered homelessness and encampments, and lessen the need for costly clean-up efforts.

Ultimately, expanding to a sustainable, year-round shelter model will contribute to a more stable, coordinated, and effective community response to homelessness, benefiting not only those directly served, but the community as a whole.

Exhibit B

Budget

**Connections Shelter Summer Expansion Budget**

| <b>Revenues</b>                   | <b>May</b> | <b>June</b> | <b>July</b> | <b>August</b> | <b>September</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|
|                                   |            |             |             |               |                  |
| Community Development Block Grant |            |             |             |               |                  |
| Affordable Housing Trust Fund     |            |             |             |               |                  |
| Donations                         |            |             |             |               |                  |
| Other Revenues (Identify)         |            |             |             |               |                  |
| <b>Total Revenues</b>             |            |             |             |               |                  |
|                                   |            |             |             |               |                  |
| <b>Expenses</b>                   |            |             |             |               |                  |
|                                   |            |             |             |               |                  |
| Salary and Wages                  |            |             |             |               |                  |
| Non-personnel Expenses            |            |             |             |               |                  |
| Facilities                        |            |             |             |               |                  |
| Other                             |            |             |             |               |                  |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>             |            |             |             |               |                  |