“It is safe to say that the advent of the residential component of our program dramatically changed...our rural agency. We’ve seen women become licensed, insured drivers and vehicle owners for the first time in their lives; supported women as they have studied and passed their GEDs and taken training for skilled jobs; and we’ve been there as kids have performed in sports, concerts and “awareness days” at their schools. Women have bravely spoken on panels educating adults and children about homelessness and related issues. We’ve worked with women to establish good rent, credit, and work histories...We’ve smiled as kids have headed off to school wearing new shoes and backpacks filled with all the school supplies that the other kids have... Domestic violence is devastating to home life...Mothers and their children have learned to replace chaos and destruction with a sense of order and caring for their surroundings.”

Linda Riddle, Executive Director of Houston County Women’s Advocates, a domestic violence and transitional housing program in Hokah, MN

Bonding request:
$10 million for transitional housing. Transitional housing has not received general obligation (GO) bonding since 1998 despite a continued need for additional investment. The request for transitional housing GO Bonding would be allocated to the commissioner of the Housing Finance Agency for transfer for the housing development fund for the loans, grants for housing homeless youth, homeless families, battered women, and individuals leaving prostitution.

The link between domestic violence and homelessness:
- 92% of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives.¹
- In 2003, nearly one in three homeless women in Minnesota was homeless at least in part because of domestic abuse.²
- Nearly half of homeless women reported that they stayed in an abusive relationship because they had nowhere else to live.³
- Of adults with children in transitional housing in Ramsey County, 31% reported physical abuse as a reason leading them to transitional housing.⁴

Barriers to housing for battered women:
- Partner’s Abusive Behavior: The perpetrator often wreaks havoc on a woman’s credit history, leaves her with no landlord references, and denies her the ability to receive her security/utility deposit. The partner may also cause a woman to lose a job due to injuries at home causing excessive absenteeism or his harassment of her at work endangers others.
- Consequences of Housing Policy: HUD has narrowed who is eligible for McKinney Vento funding for permanent supportive housing and has repealed the preference for battered women, which means it may take a survivor months or even years to find affordable, permanent, or transitional housing. A prostituted women may not qualify for housing because of her criminal record. If a program that serves battered women or prostituted women receives funding for transitional housing, the policies may be more lenient, allowing her up to two years to maintain stability to get her out of prostitution.
- Lack of Financial Resources: The lack of affordable housing, decline in state and federal housing subsidies, housing discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities, and reductions in public assistance programs present even further barriers to low-income women who may not have savings or job skills to acquire an adequate wage to support themselves and their children
- Disconnect in Funding Streams Complicate Service Delivery: Funding streams are set up for specific service needs (i.e. mental health, child care, or...
energy assistance) and do not consider the whole person, forcing many people to fall through the cracks because they don’t fit into an appropriate box.

There is a lack of safe, decent, affordable, long-term housing in Minnesota:

- 36,900,000 households in the United States (31% of all households) lacked safe, decent, and affordable housing in 2001.¹
- The Section 8 list maintained by the Public Housing Authority of St. Paul has been closed since 2002. In St. Paul, there are roughly 7,000 people on the waiting list to gain residence in public housing. In St. Paul, the housing authority hasn't purchased or built any new public housing in a decade.²
- Currently there are almost 7,000 households waiting for subsidized housing in Minneapolis. The city's housing authority hasn't added any new names to the waiting list since 2003.³
- From 1990 to 2000, median home sales prices in Minnesota increased 37%. In the same period, incomes increased only 17%—less than half the increase of home prices.⁴
- Of adults with children in transitional housing in Ramsey County, 73% reported lack of affordable housing as a reason leading them to transitional housing.⁵

Transitional housing bridges the gap between emergency shelter and permanent housing:

- The average stay at an emergency homeless shelter is 60 days, while the average length of time it takes a homeless family to secure housing is 6-10 months.⁶
- As a result of a lack of subsidized or affordable housing, battered women are staying longer in Minnesota’s 27 domestic violence shelters, and the shelters are frequently full and must turn families away. Request for emergency shelter by homeless families with children increased in 78% of U.S. cities surveyed in 2003.⁷
- In Ramsey County, the average family stayed in transitional housing one year and two months. 48% of those families moved into rental housing after transitional housing. 10% moved in with relatives. 20% moved into Section 8 housing.⁸
- The majority of battered women in transitional housing state that had these programs not existed, they would have returned to their abusers.⁹

²Wilder Research Center, Homeless in Minnesota 2003. Ibid.
³Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, and Battered Women’s Shelters, Wilder Research Center, December 2004.
⁴Housing in America: Recent Research on Housing Trends. Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding. 2003.
⁵“The Last Place on Earth,” City Pages, January 18, 2006. Ibid.
⁶Property Tax Division of the Minnesota Department of Revenue; U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 censuses.
⁷Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, and Battered Women’s Shelters, Wilder Research Center, December 2004.
⁸Lifting the Voices of Homeless Women, Roofless
¹¹Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, and Battered Women’s Shelters, Wilder Research Center, December 2004.

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