



NEWS RELEASE

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<https://avenuesforyouth.org/capacity-campaign>

“A Home of Our Own”

Avenues for Youth breaks ground on new housing site in North Minneapolis for youth experiencing homelessness

(Minneapolis, MN – April 15) – Avenues for Youth, a nonprofit organization helping youth find a path out of homelessness, will break ground Tuesday, April 29, at 3:00 pm on a new housing and headquarters site at 1404 North 8th Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55411.

This new site will allow Avenues to significantly increase the number of young people it helps achieve stable housing. It will also add emergency overnight beds, affordable apartments for youth who are learning to live independently, and other important features.

“The existing housing programs for youth experiencing homelessness in Minnesota can support just a small fraction of the need,” says Katherine Meerse, Executive Director of Avenues. “This new site will address a critical need for housing options, in North Minneapolis especially. It will also help us improve outcomes for the youth we serve, to make sure that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.”

The new site will:

- Increase the number of young people supported by Avenues from 300 to 500 annually.
- Increase dignity, health, and safety with 20 shelter and transitional living beds that provide each resident with a separate bedroom and access to nongendered, individual bathrooms.
- Increase the number of emergency overnight beds from one to two to offer a safe place for youth in crisis until a longer-term solution can be identified.
- Add 8 affordable apartments for youth, ages 18+, where they can live independently but still have access to key Avenues supports to help them overcome barriers, build a rental history, and learn vital life skills.
- Provide flexible gathering space for a variety of youth-led programs and health and wellness space to accommodate physical and mental health practitioners who are critical to supporting Avenues’ youth.
- Serve as the new administrative headquarters for Avenues.
- Showcase sustainable design, including solar panels, storm water management, and intentional connections to public transit and bike/pedestrian amenities.
- Offer access to nature across the street from the spacious Bethune Park.

[Tri-Construction](#), a minority-owned construction company based in North Minneapolis, is working in partnership with [Watson-Forsberg](#) as co-general contractors for this project.

“We need to invest in organizations like Avenues because they recognize that while shelter does save lives, housing is what ends homelessness,” says Cathy ten Broeke, Assistant Commissioner and Executive Director, Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness.

To date, nearly \$21 million has been committed toward the project through a targeted fundraising campaign. In addition to significant philanthropic support, funding for this project has been provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Hennepin County Environmental Response Fund and the City of Minneapolis, and the Metropolitan Council Metropolitan Livable Communities Fund and the City of Minneapolis.

“As Avenues begins its fourth decade, this campaign will sustain our work for years to come,” says Alexis Kantor, who is serving as a co-chair for the campaign. “Our youth need this housing and supportive services, and our community has demonstrated that it is ready to act.”

About Avenues for Youth

Avenues for Youth partners with youth experiencing homelessness to achieve their dreams. For over 30 years, Avenues has supported youth, ages 16-24, in the Twin Cities Metro area. Whether a young person needs a place to stay for just one night, or a year or more, Avenues helps youth find their path out of homelessness by providing a stable home, building trusting relationships, and supporting the youth in reaching their goals in education, career, health and wellness, and/or housing.

Avenues has a proven track record:

- Last year 77% of youth in its Minneapolis Avenues and Brooklyn Avenues programs exited to safe and stable housing.
- 100% of youth in its ConneQT host home program for LGBTQI+ youth have exited to safe and stable housing over the last several years.
- 100% of parents aged 18 to 24 in the Young Families Program have exited to safe and stable housing over the last three years after receiving rent subsidies and individualized support.

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Groundbreaking Schedule

- 3:00 pm Groundbreaking program at the site, 1404 North 8th Avenue, Minneapolis, MN; Speakers include emcee Alexis Kantor (co-chair of the capacity campaign committee and former board member); Katherine Meerse (Avenues Executive Director); Calvin Littlejohn (owner, Tri-Construction); Ky'Mari Love (former youth of Avenues); Shawn Sorrell (Avenues Board member).
- 4:30 pm Groundbreaking celebration at Utepils Brewing (a portion of every beverage sale will support Avenues)