

PRESS RELEASE

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Found House IHN endorses Issue 24 Cincinnati, OH—



“We just cannot sit on the sidelines anymore,” says Stacey Burge, Found House IHN President & CEO. “We are a service organization and we focus on getting families housed every day. We are not political, but we are seeing Cincinnati families fall so behind, our work is being so hampered by lack of affordable, habitable rentals that we just cannot sit out the opportunity to support any reasonable effort to end this crisis.”

Found House Interfaith Housing Network has worked with families facing housing loss and insecurity for 32 years providing emergency shelter in partnership with interfaith communities, housing, and family supports, such as child enrichment and pet services. All programs work to keep families together, however they define themselves, including dogs and cats, and housed. Found House IHN ultimately wants to help build a community where all families have access to housing they can afford and that meets their needs.

Board Member, Dr. Esly Caldwell, II, referencing Martin Luther King, Jr. says, “*If not now, when?* We are asked to wait, but the families we see cannot wait. They must be helped now,” in reference to Issue 24. The Found House IHN Board of Directors voted to endorse the issue this week based on what the agency is seeing every day in its work with parents, children, and families.

Found House IHN serves nearly 400 families each year. In emergency shelter, lack of housing is not only captured in the profile of families being served that includes families with housing subsidy vouchers that cannot find rentals with which to use them, but in the numbers. The average length of stay at Found House IHN shelter just five years ago was 32 days. That number has now reached 90. The longer it takes to house families, the fewer families that can be assisted, and this increase is all related to lack of housing. There are families that languish in shelter for six months, or more.

Still, that is a better reality than the families that need and cannot access shelter at all. As of last month, Central Access Point (CAP) data showed that 73% of eligible families that called for assistance were not able to get it due to lack of capacity. Additional housing would help remove this clog and get more parents and children out of cars, off floors and couches, housed, and ready to get on with school, work, and the business of being Cincinnati families.

Found House IHN appreciates City investment in housing families and utilizes some of that investment in the form of Human Services Funds to shelter and keep families housed. The agency also collaborated with the City, among many others, on the building of Melrose Place, a 26-unit apartment building in Walnut Hills. Found House IHN worries the impact of these and other investments will be diluted and undermined if the larger housing crisis is not substantively addressed. Found House IHN invites Cincinnati voters that share these worries to join in support of Issue 24.