

2020 TWITTER ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

Affordable housing is more important than ever. Over 1 in 4 Minnesotans pays more than they can afford on housing, and that number continues to grow. With the COVID-19 pandemic, things have only gotten worse. Families across Minnesota are struggling to make up for lost income, healthcare bills, and housing costs. At the same time, the legislature has been operating remotely. So, too, must advocates. Here is our guide to using Twitter to engage your state lawmakers and advocate for affordable housing. We can't do it alone – we need your help!

WHY TWITTER?

State leaders are working remotely during this time of social distancing. That means we need to do the same and double-down on our virtual advocacy tactics. And, despite its various shortcomings, social media is a powerful tool for grassroots engagement. Platforms like Twitter offer direct, unfiltered access to elected officials. Many state leaders use Twitter to gauge public opinion, spur discourse, and announce their priorities. They pay attention to it, and so should we.

TWITTER: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Used by over 22% of the American public, Twitter is one of the most popular social media platforms.¹ Here's what you need to know before getting started.

- **Basic format:** Twitter users post short, 280-character messages, called “Tweets.” Other users can engage with those Tweets by “liking” them, replying to them, or “retweeting” them.
- **Handles:** Every Twitter user, whether an individual or organization, has a unique “handle.” A handle is the username that appears after the @ symbol on your Twitter profile. You can “mention” other users by including their handle into the text of your Tweet. When you mention someone in a Tweet, they will receive a notification.
- **Hashtags:** A hashtag is any text immediately preceded by the # symbol. Hashtags are used to label the content or keywords of your Tweet and group it with similar Tweets. When you click on a hashtag, you will see other Tweets containing the same keyword or topic.
- **Followers:** You can follow any other Twitter user. When you follow someone, their Tweets will appear in your “Home” timeline. You don't need someone to follow you to be able to follow them. Many celebrities have millions of followers and don't follow all of them in return.
- **Conversation:** Twitter allows for multiple users to take part in public conversation. You can comment on a Tweet by hitting the “reply” icon next to it. You can Retweet, which shares another user's Tweet to your followers. You can also tag other users in your Tweets, to direct your message at them.
- **Note:** You need an account to participate on Twitter. [Learn more about Twitter here.](#)

¹ According to a report published by the Pew Research Center in April 2019, [here](#).

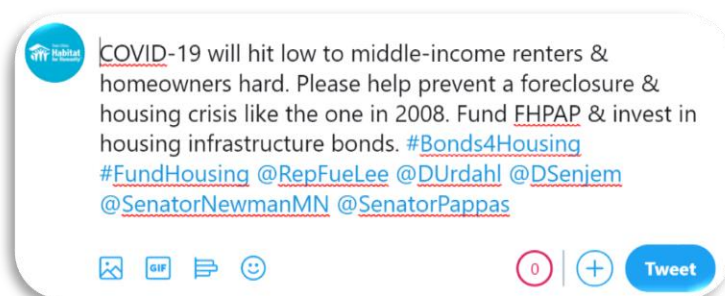
OUR 2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The 2020 state legislative session concluded on Monday, May 18. Neither of our legislative priorities were passed. State Legislators are expected to reconvene for a special session by June 12, which means we can continue to push for our two key priorities.

- **Increased funding for the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP)**
This program provides emergency housing assistance funds that can be used to make mortgage, rent, and utilities payments. (HF 4541 | SF 4495)
- **Investment in Housing Infrastructure Bonds**
These bonds will fund the development of affordable rental housing, supportive housing, manufactured housing, and permanently affordable homeownership through community land trusts. (HF 3326 | SF 3257)

HOW TO CREATE A TWEET

When you log in to Twitter, you'll see a menu running along the left side of your screen. To draft a Tweet, click the blue icon at the bottom with a plus-sign and quill. This will bring up a text box, where you can draft your tweet, which will look something like this.



All tweets are limited to 280 characters, including handles and hashtags. The red circle with a 0 inside indicates the number of available characters remaining. If the Tweet above were just one number or letter longer, the circle would show a -1, and it would be impossible to post without editing.

You can see that the hashtags and lawmaker handles are highlighted in blue. If you share this Tweet on your page, each lawmaker will receive a notification that you "mentioned them." The more tweets they receive on a certain topic, the more likely they are to pay attention to that topic.

On the next page of this guide, you'll find pre-drafted Tweets for you to post. All you need to do is copy and paste them into Twitter and click "Tweet," in the bottom corner, to publish your content. You can also create your own Tweets in support of affordable housing. If you wish to do so, you can use the following hashtags: #Bonds4Housing; #FundHousing; #InvestInHome; #Homes4AllMN.

And you can tag the following lawmakers:

Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan: @GovTimWalz @LtGovFlanagan
State Leadership: @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt
Key Lawmakers: @RepFueLee @DUrdahl @DSenjem @SenatorNewmanMN @SenatorPappas

PRE-DRAFTED TWEETS to copy/paste:

State leaders, please increase funding for the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) and help Minnesota families weather the storm of COVID-19. @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt #InvestInHome #FundHousing

Families across Minnesota are reeling from the impacts of COVID-19. Let's take care of our neighbors during this time and increase funding for FHPAP. This program helps families pay their rents, mortgages, and more. @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt #FundHousing

Did you know FHPAP can be used for mortgage payments, utilities, navigation services, & more? This program is worth investing in because it works. Increase funding for FHPAP and help stabilize our communities. #InvestInHome #mnleg @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt

At Habitat for Humanity, we see first-hand how homeowners are affected by COVID-19. In 2008-09, thousands of people across the country lost their homes to foreclosure. We can't let that happen again. #InvestInHome #FundHousing @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt

COVID-19 will hit low to middle-income renters & homeowners hard. Please help prevent a foreclosure & housing crisis like the one in 2008. Fund FHPAP & invest in housing infrastructure bonds. #Bonds4Housing #FundHousing @RepFueLee @Durdahl @DSenjem @SenatorNewmanMN @SenatorPappas

More than 1 in 4 households in MN pays more than they can afford on housing. That number is growing, & we need to do something about it. Increase funding for FHPAP and invest in #Bonds4Housing to make home affordable. @RepFueLee @Durdahl @DSenjem @SenatorNewmanMN @SenatorPappas

Our population is growing faster than our housing market. To keep up with demand, MN will need 10k new units each year. That's why we need #Bonds4Housing - to jumpstart new construction & increase our housing supply. @RepFueLee @Durdahl @DSenjem @SenatorNewmanMN @SenatorPappas

#Bonds4Housing create jobs. Housing development projects create jobs for hundreds of workers. Bonding dollars also help build workforce housing, which workers and businesses need to thrive. #InvestInHome #FundHousing @RepFueLee @Durdahl @DSenjem @SenatorNewmanMN @SenatorPappas

We already had a housing crisis. COVID-19 has only made things worse. The workers most impacted by COVID-19, including retail sales and food service workers, are at risk for losing their housing. That's why we need to #InvestInHome and prioritize #Bonds4Housing. @RepFueLee @Durdahl @DSenjem @SenatorNewmanMN @SenatorPappas

With COVID-19 threatening the stability of families across MN, please make safe and secure housing a priority, through increased funding for FHPAP. #InvestInHome #Homes4All @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt

Please support a funding increase for the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) so that Minnesota's communities remain strong. #InvestInHome #FundHousing @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt

Housing infrastructure bonds help fund affordable rental housing, supportive housing, manufactured homes, and permanently affordable homeownership. It's time we #InvestInHome. Please make #Bonds4Housing a priority. @RepFueLee @DUrdahl @DSenjem @SenatorNewmanMN @SenatorPappas

We need investments to FHPAP housing assistance especially with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please prioritize safe and secure housing. #Homes4AllMN #mnleg @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt

More than half a million Minnesota families pay more than they can afford on housing, and that number is continuing to grow. Please invest in #Bonds4Housing. @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt @RepFueLee @DUrdahl @DSenjem @SenatorNewmanMN @SenatorPappas

The effects of COVID-19 could last a year or more. We need to take action now to protect ourselves and our neighbors in the long term. Make a significant investment in #Bonds4Housing and help stave off an even worse crisis. @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt

Housing is the foundation for everything else in our lives. When people have access to safe, stable, & affordable housing: children excel in school, workers earn, seniors thrive, & communities prosper. #InvestInHome @PaulGazelka @SusanKentMN @MelissaHortman @KDaudt

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ANY QUESTIONS?

Contact your Twin Cities Habitat Advocacy Team! We are here to help you navigate this new normal. We also want to hear your questions, comments, and ideas. Email us at advocacy@tchabitat.org!