



April 30, 2024

Mr. Brent Lee  
Program Director, Community Development  
Lilly Endowment, Inc.  
2801 N. Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

Dear Brent,

On behalf of the City of Bloomington, I am writing to reflect our support for the Community Foundation's GIFT VIII Implementation Grant concept paper for funding through Lilly Endowment, Inc.

Housing insecurity and unsheltered homelessness has been a long-standing challenge in Bloomington. I've been at the forefront of addressing this challenge even before taking office as Mayor in January, having led our county's Habitat for Humanity affiliate and serving as Director for the Center for Rural Engagement at Indiana University. While progress has been made, we are at a pivotal moment. On my fourth day as Mayor, I went to serve alongside city sanitation crews, social workers, and medical outreach specialists to clear a homeless encampment. As I spoke first-hand with the people camping there, it was apparent that a drastic and innovative solution is required.

This concept paper proposes a "both-and" approach to strengthening the housing security ecosystem in Bloomington. The infusion of comprehensive case management coupled with long-term diversion efforts will not only stabilize our overextended support network, but will alleviate future bottlenecks. The best way we can serve people who are housing insecure is ensure they never become homeless in the first place, and this proposal seeks to establish a new infrastructure to accomplish that. This is a model in which households will not only experience more effective social services, but also build relationships that are long-term, connecting them to volunteers who will support them well beyond the term of this grant.

The City of Bloomington has long partnered with the Community Foundation and sought their leadership in key quality of place issues. Our city administration has complete confidence in the Foundation's ability to convene key stakeholders, manage grant funding, and most importantly, deliver impactful results.

I hope you will consider supporting this critical initiative for our Bloomington neighbors in need.

Sincerely,

Kerry Thomson  
Mayor, City of Bloomington