

Testimony from Heather Ingman, Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center
North Dakota House Government Operations Subcommittee on Appropriations March 20, 2025
SB 2014

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Heather Ingman, Assistant Director at Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center (DVRCC), Dickinson. DVRCC serves all of south western North Dakota and provides the only emergency shelter both for victims of violence and homeless families within a 100 mile radius.

I have been a part of this agency for almost 15 years as well as hold a seat on both the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People and the Continuum of Care boards. I have invested a large part of my professional career to assisting those who have found themselves in less than fortunate circumstances. Professionally, I can state that during my career working with families and individuals experiencing homelessness, I have never seen such a lack of funding, services and affordable housing than what we are currently seeing.

I am not only writing for support, but for an ask that at least \$10 million be allocated for the North Dakota Homeless Grant, and at least \$50 million be allocated for the Housing Incentive Fund. I, by no means am an expert when it comes to serving our state's homeless population, however I have many years experience working with minimal resources and shallow pockets of funding, all the while working with my partners across the state trying to end our communities homeless population.

I understand that for the average person who does not work in this line of work could determine that the solution to ending the state's homeless problems would be housing. A simple concept becomes extremely complex when you take into consideration funding, employment, services, household size, barriers and the cost of living. I could go on for days trying to explain the ins and outs of homelessness, however I would be left with the same conclusion housing alone does not eliminate a family or individual from no longer becoming homeless.

The fact is that unless we provide wrap-around supportive services along with housing, people will more than likely remain homeless. If maintaining housing alone was a simple solution, everybody would be housed.

If we as a state would like to end homelessness, we need to take a whole system approach in doing so. We need to provide funding for the North Dakota Homeless Grant and the Housing Incentive Fund. We need to take an approach from the top all the way down to the bottom. We need to provide support (funding) for the agencies who are already doing wrap around case management, and providing a coordinated, strategic response to each households unique needs.

The bottom line is that every person, every family that we serve comes to us with a unique set of circumstances. As a state, we have a responsibility to take care of each other, support one another and remember that every person who finds themselves in a state of homelessness is somebodys mother, daughter, father, son, uncle, brother or sister.

I not only support SB 2014 but I recomend the funding of at least \$10 millino for the the North Dakota Homeless Grants and at least \$50 million for the Housing Incentive Fund.

Thank you,

Heather Ingman
Assistant Director, Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center.

