



Native American Development
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January 30, 2023

NATIVE, Inc.
Testimony in Support of HB 1014
House Appropriations - Government Operations Division

Chairman Monson and Members of the Committee, my name is Lorraine Davis, Founder and CEO of the only Native American-led community-based organization called NATIVE, Inc. providing homeless and behavioral health prevention services to Native Americans and other marginalized populations in the Bismarck and Fargo metropolitan areas of North Dakota. NATIVE, Inc. has been a grant recipient of the emergency solutions grant and ND homeless grant providing rapid rehousing, street outreach, and housing care coordination since 2017. I also serve as a board member of the state's Continuum of Care since 2015.

I am here today in **support** of House Bill 1014 and ask this committee to increase the current budget of \$25 million for the Housing Incentive Fund to \$50 million and ask for an increased allocation to be made to the North Dakota Homeless Grant.

Prior to my current role, I had served as a Family Housing Director at an ND tribal college. I administered 114 housing units and one 24-unit low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) apartment complex.

A large increase to the housing incentive fund (HIF) would:

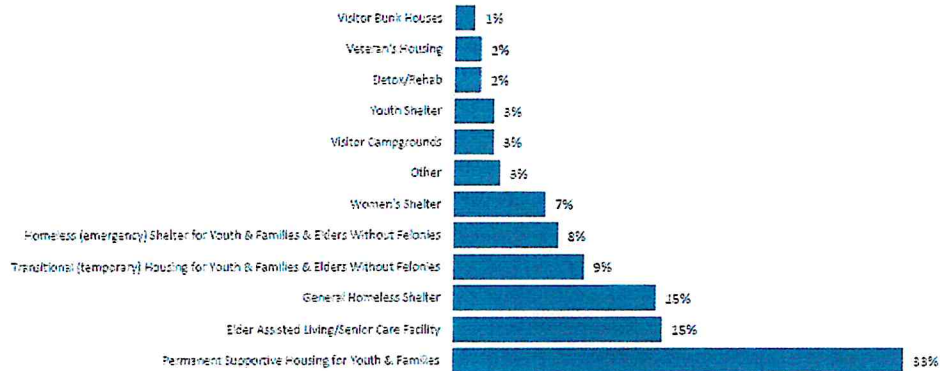
- **Improve workforce development.** An increase in affordable housing options in ND communities would include filling in housing gaps for working individuals and families with low to moderate incomes who seek to achieve recovery and quality of life.
- **Stabilize a strong workforce.**
- **Improve social determinants of health.**

It is important to point out evidence that supports these claims. Therefore, I share with you two recent statewide needs assessments.

First, NATIVE, Inc. conducted a 2022 statewide community needs assessment called the Great Plains Indians VOICES that targeted Tribal members living in Bismarck and Fargo metropolitan areas. **When asked if they would live in affordable housing that provides support services, over three-quarters of respondents said yes. 70% of respondents would like to live in stable, affordable housing. The most desired type of residential housing was three-to-four-bedroom homes, as their first choice.**

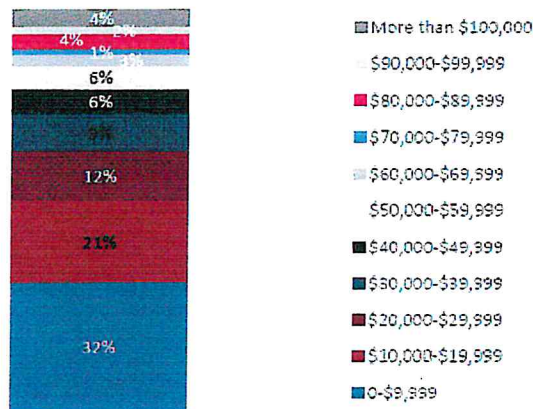
33% chose permanent supportive housing for youth and families, followed by 15% each in favor of elder assisted living/senior care facilities and general homeless shelters.

RESIDENTIAL FACILITY/SHELTER: FIRST CHOICE



Regarding annual household income and expenses. 32% reported an annual household income of \$0 to \$9,999, and 53% of respondents earn less than \$20,000 a year.

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Second, the ND Housing Finance Agency conducted a recent Statewide Housing Needs Assessment that indicated the following:

- **New housing is needed based on population projections.**
- **2025 Population growth is projected highest in these age categories: 0-17, 25-44, and 65 plus.**
- **State's largest household income category is less than \$50,000.**
- **The majority of households who rent fall into the extremely low, very low, and low-income populations but yet there are few units that are available to Extremely Low and Very Low-Income households.**
- **Median gross rent today is \$826 for a two-bedroom, an increase of 49% in 10 years. A substantial portion of renters is cost-burdened, especially younger, and senior householders which suggest we have issues with rental affordability.**



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In closing, ND has a great opportunity to invest in preventative approaches toward helping people achieve prosperity. I respectfully request to increase HIF from \$25M to \$50M and to increase the ND homeless grant with sufficient funding to expand projects taking a step toward strengthening and stabilizing a strong workforce and economy.

I stand for any questions. Thank you for your time.