



March 9, 2023

IN SUPPORT - HB 1014- Industrial Commission Budget  
ND Housing Finance Agency, HIF  
Senate Appropriations- Education and Environment Division  
Janelle Moos, AARP North Dakota

Chair Sorvaag and Members of the Committee,

I am Janelle Moos, Associate State Director of Advocacy at AARP North Dakota. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization with more than 83,000 members in North Dakota. I'm here to offer support for the Housing Incentive Fund or HIF in the Industrial Commission budget for the ND Housing Finance Agency.

Programs like the Housing Incentive Fund help older North Dakotans, especially those with low or fixed incomes, live in safe, comfortable housing at an affordable price. Providing incentives to developers to include low-income set-aside units in their developments is a creative and effective way to promote affordable housing. AARP policy supports the tenants of the Housing Incentive Fund. Specifically, there are two AARP policy principles that call for a program like HIF:

***“Promote affordable housing options.** Ensure that land use and other policies support the private and public sectors in providing a variety of housing sizes and types. Promote funding and policy for programs that lead to an adequate supply of affordable rental and ownership options integrated with the community to meet the needs of people of all ages, family compositions, and incomes.”*

***“Increase capacity for public-private partnerships.** Reauthorize or create programs and policies at the federal, state, and local levels to ensure that the private sector has the capacity and tools to effectively partner with governmental agencies to increase the range of housing choices available to older people.”*

At AARP North Dakota, we believe people should be given every opportunity to choose where they live as they age. Making affordable housing options available can help keep people in the communities where they live and out of institutional care longer, saving the state money in the long run.

Data from the recent 2020-2025 Statewide Housing Needs Assessment facilitated by the North Dakota State University's Center for Social Research shows the continued need for HIF. The research specifically notes that the most significant change in population that is expected to occur by 2025 will be the aging forward of the baby boomer cohort into the 'age 65 and older'

category. Statewide, population in the 'age 65 and older' category is projected to increase from 118,853 in 2020 to 147,528 in 2025, nearly 24%. This increase will translate into a heightened demand for housing that is suited to meet their needs.

Housing costs determine whether individuals and families can live in a neighborhood without sacrificing other necessities, such as food and health care. Yet almost 20 million households with adults age 50 and over living in them are housing cost burdened. That is, they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Approximately 9.8 million households headed by someone age 50 or older are considered severely cost-burdened. They spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing. Housing-cost burden affects both homeowners and renters, but renters are more likely to experience it.

Given the data from the housing needs assessment, we believe the priority of HIF should be on low-income North Dakotans who desperately need affordable housing. The funding in your current budget draft is not enough and we urge you to restore funding for HIF to \$25 million as was originally requested.

The Housing Incentive Fund is an excellent private and public partnership designed to build homes – and help keep North Dakotans safe and secure in the communities where they choose to live.

Again, we support the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency's commitment to the Housing Incentive Fund. We urge you to support increasing the funding for HIF to \$25 million in HB 1014.

Thank you.