



Members of the North Dakota Legislature,

My name is Mason Ware, and I am speaking today on behalf of Better Together ND, a provider of services through the North Dakota Community Connect and Free Through Recovery programs. Our organization has had the privilege of working with individuals who have faced housing instability, addiction, and justice system involvement. Through these programs, we have witnessed transformational success stories—clients who were once homeless now have stable housing, individuals battling addiction are achieving long-term recovery, and people who felt hopeless are now building better lives for themselves and their families.

What makes Community Connect and Free Through Recovery so effective is their comprehensive, person-centered approach. These programs address the root causes of instability, providing case management, peer support, and essential resources that empower individuals to rebuild their lives. Rather than simply reacting to crises, these programs proactively invest in people's success, preventing costly cycles of homelessness, incarceration, and emergency services.

At Better Together ND, we have seen firsthand how access to consistent support, housing assistance, and recovery services empowers individuals to break free from the barriers that once held them back. Many of our clients have transitioned from chronic instability to sustained independence—whether it's helping an individual secure stable housing after over 20 years of homelessness or guiding someone through their recovery journey to achieve long-term sobriety and financial independence, these life-changing outcomes are direct results of the resources, guidance, and ongoing support provided through Community Connect and Free Through Recovery.

Both Marie and I, co-founders of Better Together ND, are former North Dakota probation officers. Having worked within the justice system, we understand firsthand the long-term impact that these programs have, not only for the individuals they serve but for the entire community. When people receive the support they need to recover and reintegrate successfully, we see reduced recidivism, stronger families, and safer communities. The difference between someone returning to jail or becoming a thriving, contributing member of society often comes down to having access to the right support at the right time—and these programs provide exactly that.

We strongly encourage continued funding in Community Connect and Free Through Recovery. These initiatives are not just helping people survive; they are helping them rebuild their lives and contribute positively to our communities. North Dakota is stronger when we support those who need it most.

Thank you for your time, attention, and continued commitment to these life-changing programs.

Sincerely,
Mason Ware Co-Founder
Better Together ND