



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

January 27, 2025

Re: HB 1119

**Chairman Ruby and Members of the House Human Services Committee,**

My name is Lorrie Thoemke and I serve as Vice President of Learning Centers for YMCA Northern Sky which serves communities within Cass and Clay counties. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1119. We offer our support but seek additional clarity in the details beyond this bill's language.

While the YMCA supports the simplification of licensing rules, like those proposed in HB 1119, we do want to urge that the public rulemaking process allow the child care provider community a clear opportunity to help define, communicate, and enforce these rule changes which the department seeks to solidify. Without a concerted effort by the Department of Health and Human Services to involve providers directly impacted by this licensure streamlining, our programs and operating model could be negatively affected.

For instance, in Fargo, if the number of licensing categories are lowered to three from the current seven, this could potentially impact the number of School Age sites that we operate throughout Fargo and West Fargo. It would require the YMCA to provide a licensed director at each site, or increase our director team from 11 to 20, which places additional costs on the organization for those salaries of \$90,000 to \$120,000, as well as the administrative burden with background check delays and other hiring costs. We would have to turn these increased costs back on parents in our programs to offset this shortfall and would have to limit the number of children who are receiving scholarships from the YMCA.

The YMCAs are collectively the largest provider of childcare services in the state. Together, we appreciate the proposals in this bill that seek to allow all child care staff the ability to complete training in a calendar year, and the changes that allow preschool families who qualify to now access Child Care Assistance, or CCAP, among others.

Prior to passage of this bill, however, we would encourage lawmakers to make sure that as many of these nuanced situations are thought of and discussed. Additionally, we encourage the Department to have all rule changes vetted with current providers so that they are aware of the impacts on programs, staff, and the families we serve. The child care ecosystem is fragile, and added costs serve as a threat to the existing infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration as we work together to address an issue with a direct impact on workforce development in North Dakota.

Thank you,

Lorrie Thoenke  
YMCA of the Northern Sky



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**TODAY. TOMORROW.**

**TOGETHER.**

# NORTH DAKOTA ALLIANCE OF YMCAS 2024 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



\$1,736,663 in financial assistance was given to support kids and families from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to participate in North Dakota YMCA programs and activities



3,230 children were enrolled in YMCA licensed childcare centers



29,555 youth participated in out-of-school-time activities at the Y that focus on holistically fostering the physical, social and emotional development of kids

**IN ADDITION TO FULL TIME STAFF AT ALL LOCATIONS, YMCAS ARE OFTEN THE FIRST EMPLOYERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE. YMCAS ALSO OFFER OLDER ADULTS OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPLEMENT THEIR INCOME WHILE BEING PART OF A HEALTHY COMMUNITY.**

**2,113 individuals are employed by North Dakota YMCAs**



**\$25,477,591 was paid in wages and benefits by North Dakota YMCAs**



## WE ARE COMMUNITY

The YMCA makes accessible the support and opportunities that empower people and communities to learn, grow and thrive. There is no other nonprofit quite like the YMCA. That's because in 10,000 neighborhoods across the nation, we have the presence and partnerships to not just promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change.



Communities with high rates of volunteerism tend to have greater income equality than similar communities that do not.



When members make a friend they are 50% more likely to stay with the YMCA.

North Dakota YMCA's have over 100 community partnerships, some of which include:



- Foster Families
- Military Families
- Easter Seals
- United Way
- American Red Cross
- AmeriCorps
- Area Churches
- Local Hospitals
- Boys & Girls Club
- Chamber of Commerce
- City Governments
- Schools, Colleges & Universities
- Department of Corrections
- Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch
- Dakota Medica
- Foundation Ministerial Association
- Healthy North Dakota
- Home School Groups



## CARING | HONESTY | RESPECT | RESPONSIBILITY



"I love the friendships and coffee at the Y. For many of us that are seniors, it provides a primary social time in our lives."

**"Thank you for providing such a wonderful place for fitness and socializing!"**

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT | HEALTHY LIVING | SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### Alliance of North Dakota YMCAs

Grand Forks YMCA Family Center  
215 N 7th St, Grand Forks  
[gfyymca.org](http://gfyymca.org)

Missouri Valley Family YMCA  
1608 N Washington St, Bismarck  
[bismarckymca.org](http://bismarckymca.org)

The YMCA of the Northern Sky  
400 1st Ave S, & 4243 19th Ave S, Fargo  
[www.ymcanorthernsky.org](http://www.ymcanorthernsky.org)

YMCA of Minot North Dakota  
3515 16th St SW, Minot  
[ymcaminot.org](http://ymcaminot.org)