

Testimony in Support of SB 2014
House Appropriations – Government Operations Division
Chairman: Representative David Monson
March 20, 2025

Submitted by: Dan Madler, Chief Executive Officer - Beyond Shelter, Inc.
701-730-2734, dmadler@beyondshelterinc.com, Lobbyist #30

Chairman Monson and members of the Committee, my name is Dan Madler, and I am the CEO of Beyond Shelter, Inc., a mission driven North Dakota nonprofit developer of affordable housing that in the past 25 years has developed over 1,350 quality affordable housing units across North Dakota. I would like to express my support for Senate Bill 2014, and I would like to also take this opportunity to urge this committee to increase the current Senate appropriated **\$25M** for the Housing Incentive Fund (HIF) to a **\$50M** appropriation. A **\$50M** appropriation would be a strategic investment as it would provide funding at scale and actually move the needle as it relates to increasing the supply of affordable housing in North Dakota. To support this request, I offer the following:

- Housing is the backbone of North Dakota Communities
- Housing is the critical infrastructure for the growth and health of all North Dakota Communities
- Housing is both economic and community development
- The data that Jennifer Henderson with the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency provided earlier clearly demonstrates that there is a statewide demand and need for affordable housing

Two (2) boots on the ground Beyond Shelter examples to demonstrate this demand and need are:

Demand Example 1: In August of 2024, Beyond Shelter opened an affordable senior housing development in Fargo called The Plaza Apartments. The Plaza Apartments has 39 apartment homes with a mix of 1 & 2 bedrooms. We not only leased up The Plaza Apartments quickly, but during the peak of taking applications, we had 172 senior households on a wait list to rent one of the 39 affordable apartment homes. Now for me personally, I have been working in affordable housing for 31 years, and I have never seen such a high demand, such a high need for one of our affordable apartment homes.

Demand Example 2: Beyond Shelter currently has 569 affordable senior housing homes serving Minot, Dickinson, and Fargo and as of 12.31.2024, the average vacancy rate was 1.9% or only 11 vacancies.

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in HIF would play a key role in moving these planned affordable housing developments forward.

Some specific comments about the Housing Incentive Fund are:

- The Housing Incentive Fund has been proven to work and work well; thus I would urge this committee to invest at scale in things that work
- The Housing Incentive Fund is very nimble and works well with leveraging all affordable housing federal funds that ND currently receives
- The Housing Incentive Fund is a strategic investment with a proven Return On Investment. A real time example of this Return On Investment is as follows:

Beyond Shelter, in partnership with the Burleigh County Housing Authority (BCHA) is currently working on two affordable housing developments here in Bismarck. The first development is Washington Court, which is the redevelopment of 96 affordable multi-family apartment homes. For every \$1 of HIF invested in Washington Court, Beyond Shelter and the BCHA has been able to develop and preserve \$9 in long-term affordable housing assets. The second development is the new construction of 14 townhome style apartment rental homes and 20 affordable senior rental homes called Dakota II. For every \$1 of HIF invested in Dakota II, Beyond Shelter and the BCHA has been able to develop \$35 in long-term affordable housing assets.

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Chairman Monson and members of the Committee, my name is Dan Madler, and I am the CEO of Beyond Shelter, Inc., a mission driven North Dakota nonprofit developer of affordable housing that in the past 25 years has developed over 1,350 quality affordable housing units across North Dakota. I would like to express my support for Senate Bill 2014, and I would like to also take this opportunity to urge this committee to increase the current Senate appropriated **\$25M** for the Housing Incentive Fund (HIF) to a **\$50M** appropriation. A **\$50M** appropriation would be a strategic investment as it would provide funding at scale and actually move the needle as it relates to increasing the supply of affordable housing in North Dakota. To support this request, I offer the following:

- Housing is the backbone of North Dakota Communities
- Housing is the critical infrastructure for the growth and health of all North Dakota Communities
- Housing is both economic and community development
- The data that Jennifer Henderson with the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency provided earlier clearly demonstrates that there is a statewide demand and need for affordable housing

Two (2) boots on the ground Beyond Shelter examples to demonstrate this demand and need are:

Demand Example 1: In August of 2024, Beyond Shelter opened an affordable senior housing development in Fargo called The Plaza Apartments. The Plaza Apartments has 39 apartment homes with a mix of 1 & 2 bedrooms. We not only leased up The Plaza Apartments quickly, but during the peak of taking applications, we had 172 senior households on a wait list to rent one of the 39 affordable apartment homes. Now for me personally, I have been working in affordable housing for 31 years, and I have never seen such a high demand, such a high need for one of our affordable apartment homes.

Demand Example 2: Beyond Shelter currently has 569 affordable senior housing homes serving Minot, Dickinson, and Fargo and as of 12.31.2024, the average vacancy rate was 1.9% or only 11 vacancies.

- The data that Jennifer Henderson provided earlier also clearly demonstrated that the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency is always oversubscribed by millions of dollars when it comes to actual funding requests for planned affordable housing developments across North Dakota. A \$50M investment

in HIF would play a key role in moving these planned affordable housing developments forward.

Some specific comments about the Housing Incentive Fund are:

- The Housing Incentive Fund has been proven to work and work well; thus I would urge this committee to invest at scale in things that work
- The Housing Incentive Fund is very nimble and works well with leveraging all affordable housing federal funds that ND currently receives
- The Housing Incentive Fund is a strategic investment with a proven Return On Investment. A real time example of this Return On Investment is as follows:

Beyond Shelter, in partnership with the Burleigh County Housing Authority (BCHA) is currently working on two affordable housing developments here in Bismarck. The first development is Washington Court, which is the redevelopment of 96 affordable multi-family apartment homes. For every \$1 of HIF invested in Washington Court, Beyond Shelter and the BCHA has been able to develop and preserve \$9 in long-term affordable housing assets. The second development is the new construction of 14 townhome style apartment rental homes and 20 affordable senior rental homes called Dakota II. For every \$1 of HIF invested in Dakota II, Beyond Shelter and the BCHA has been able to develop \$35 in long-term affordable housing assets.

In closing, I would say that the biggest IMPACT that this legislative body can do at this time is to increase the supply of affordable housing in North Dakota and this can be accomplished by funding the Housing Incentive Fund at scale and thus I am again urging this committee to seriously consider increasing the current Senate appropriated **\$25M** for the Housing Incentive Fund (HIF) to a **\$50M** appropriation.

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Testimony in Support of SB 2014
House Appropriations – Government Operations Division
Chairman: Representative David Monson
March 20, 2025

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