

2020 Annual Report

North Dakota Interagency Council on Homelessness

Executive Summary

The North Dakota Interagency Council on Homelessness (the Council) is a collaboration among city and state government officials and a representative of the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People.

The Council was created in 2004 by Governor John Hoeven by Executive Order 2004-09 in which it was recognized that there is a need to improve access to mainstream resources critical to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

The purpose of the Council, as outlined by the executive order, is to:

- Coordinate state policy and working relationships among state agencies to identify and define issues of homelessness in North Dakota.
- Determine comprehensive and effective collaborative strategies and best practices for preventing and ending homelessness in North Dakota.
- Review and analyze the need for and the availability of resources to address the needs of North Dakotans who are homeless.
- Recommend changes necessary to alleviate or prevent the situation of homelessness to include making recommendations to the appropriate state agencies and organizations regarding effective distribution of resources and access to available services and programs.
- Educate other state agencies, legislators, and the public about the causes of homelessness.
- Solicit input from the faith and advocacy communities, the business community, and consumers regarding policy and program development to identify and define issues of homelessness in order to develop effective collaborative strategies for preventing and ending homelessness in North Dakota.

The Council is made up of the following individuals or their designees:

- A designee from the North Dakota Governor's Office.
- The heads of North Dakota's Departments of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Human Services, and Public Instruction, Housing Finance Agency, Indian Affairs Commission, Job Service, Commerce's Division of Community Services, and other departments or agencies as the Governor deems appropriate.
- The mayors of Bismarck, Fargo, and Grand Forks.
- The president of the North Dakota Coalition for Homeless People.

This annual report is submitted to the Governor at the direction of Executive Order 2004-09 to illustrate North Dakota's progress in preventing and alleviating the incidence of homelessness.

WHERE WE STAND

As stated in the Council’s 2018 Housing the Homeless Report, North Dakota’s vulnerable populations require person-centered approaches to address their unique needs based on their current living situation, physical and mental health, and financial stability. Affordable housing and supportive services continue to be essential to prevent and reduce both short-term and chronic homelessness.

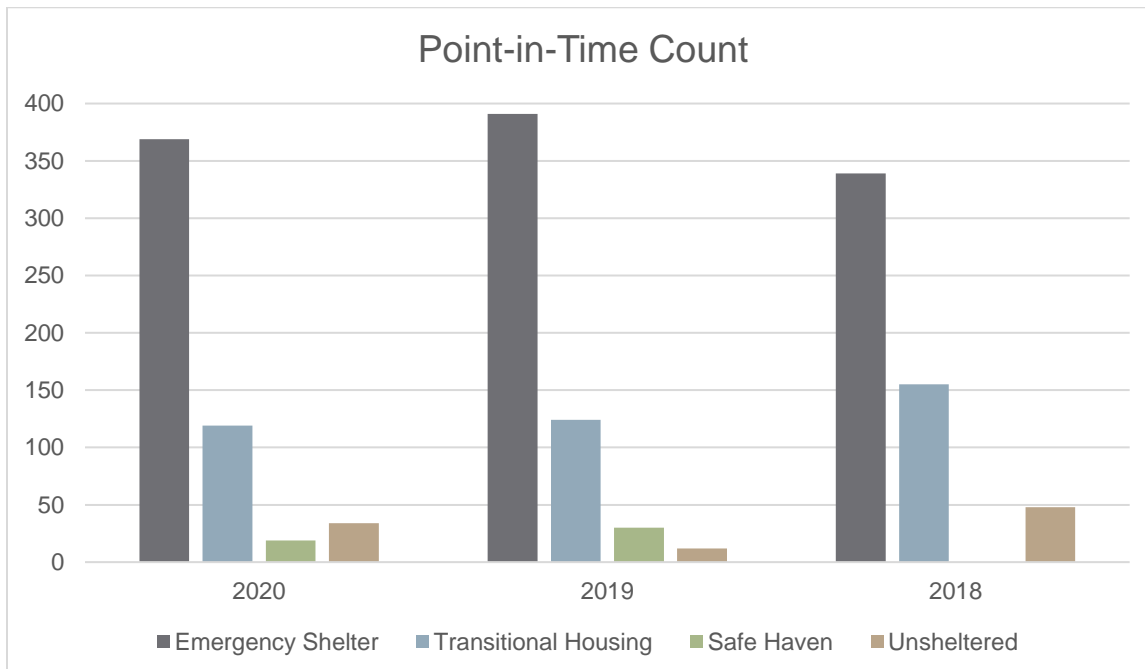
Every year the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires a Point-in-Time (PIT) count, on a single night in January, to identify the number of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness. Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally. HUD also requires a Housing Inventory Count (HIC) to determine the number of beds and housing units across the state dedicated to serving people experiencing homelessness. Both counts are coordinated by the North Dakota Continuum of Care (ND CoC).

POINT IN TIME COUNT

Counting North Dakota’s homeless populations is extremely difficult due to multiple definitions of homelessness at the federal level, the mobility of the population, rural isolation, and the cyclical nature of homelessness for many individuals and families.

In 2020, the state counted 541 total persons experiencing homelessness during the PIT Count compared to 557 in 2019 and 542 in 2018.

North Dakota’s extreme weather conditions make it difficult for the counters to be successful, which produces a lower count total.

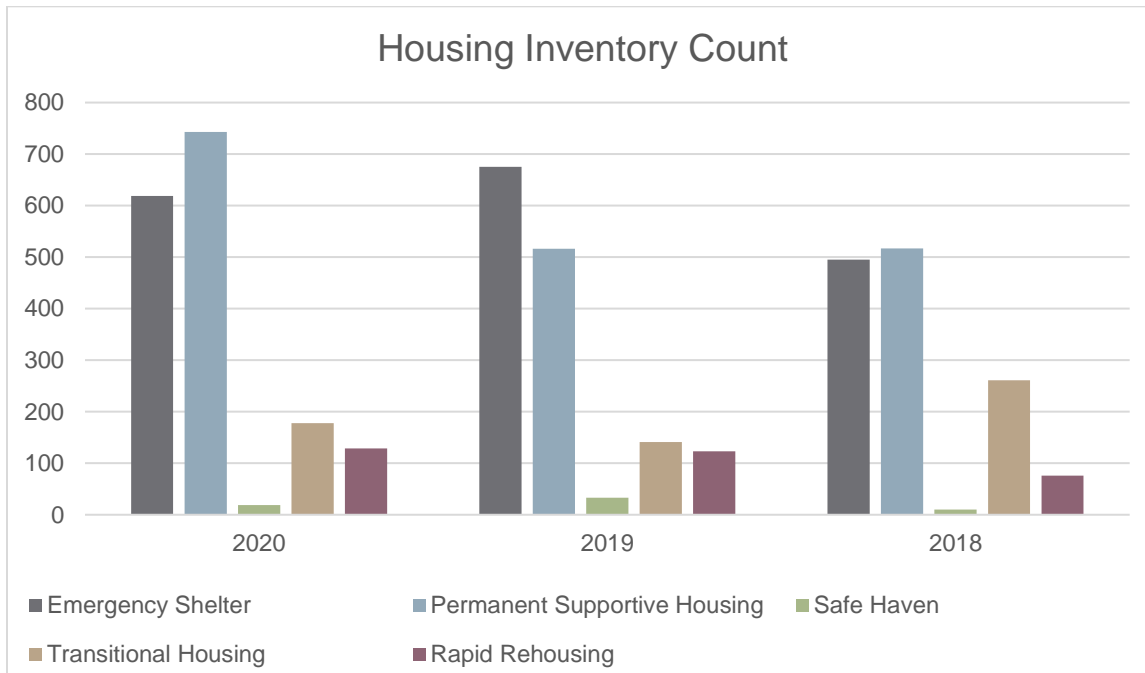


Source: HUD Homelessness Data Exchange

HOUSING INVENTORY COUNT

The HIC is conducted annually in conjunction with the PIT count. In 2020, North Dakota reported 1,685 total beds in emergency shelters, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and safe havens. The completion of housing projects in Grand Forks and Bismarck, LaGrave Place and Edwinton Place respectively, and the addition of the Department of Veterans Affairs statewide HUD-VASH beds increased the number of permanent supportive housing beds by 227 over the prior year.

When person-supportive agencies can place individuals and families into housing with supportive services, people are more likely to be able to stabilize which reduces the cost of emergency shelters and the overall expenses of homelessness for the state.



Source: Homeless Management Information System

MAINSTREAM HOUSING VOUCHERS

Mainstream Vouchers assist non-elderly persons with disabilities. Applicants must be either residing in an institution or segregated living; at risk of residing in an institution or segregated housing; at risk of becoming homeless; or chronically homeless. Aside from serving a special population, Mainstream Vouchers are administered using the same rules as other housing choice vouchers. Funding and financial reporting for Mainstream Vouchers is separate from the regular tenant-based voucher program. In North Dakota, six housing authorities administered the Mainstream Voucher program. As of November 2020, 319 households were being assisted under Mainstream Vouchers that would have been homeless or institutionalization.

- ND002: Williston Housing Authority
- ND011: Great Plains Housing Authority (Jamestown)
- ND012: Grand Forks Housing Authority
- ND014: Fargo Housing and Redevelopment Authority
- ND017: Minot Housing Authority
- ND021: Burleigh County Housing Authority

Code	Housing Authority	MS5 Vouchers
ND002	Williston Housing Authority	12
ND011	Great Plains Housing Authority (Jamestown region)	94
ND012	Grand Forks Housing Authority	74
ND014	Fargo Housing and Redevelopment Authority	87
ND017	Minot Housing Authority	34
ND021	Burleigh County Housing Authority	18
Total Mainstream Vouchers Leased		319

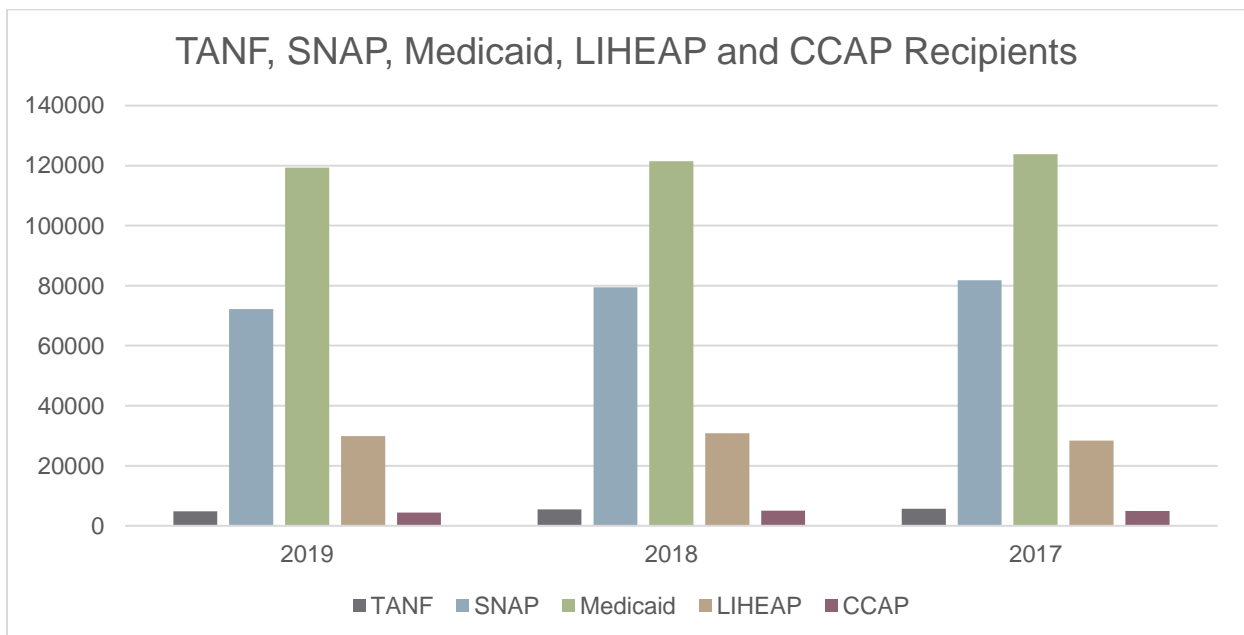
Reporting as of November 2020

North Dakota Housing Authorities first received Mainstream Vouchers in late 2018. ND001 Cass County Housing Authority received a Mainstream program to start January 1, 2021. Mainstream Voucher programs are part of HUD.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

The North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) administers several federally-funded public assistance programs that provide timely, targeted and temporary benefits to people to ensure access to basic needs such as food and heat, in addition to programs designed to help low-income families with children achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) assisted 4,813 recipients in FY 2019. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) aided 72,203 recipients and Medicaid assisted 122,304 individuals in the same time frame. Additionally, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helped 29,892 clients and the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) supported 4,411 clients. Overall, there has been a reduction in 13,900 services provided since 2017.

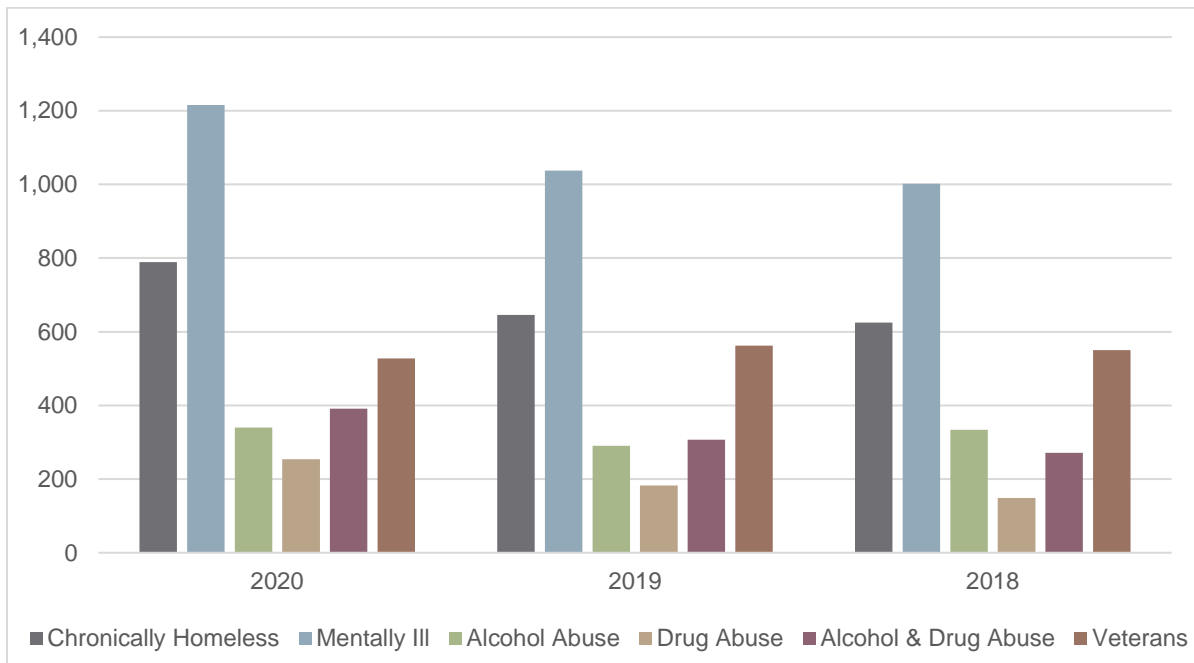


Source: ND DHS (<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/eap-unduplicated-count-report-sfy2019.pdf>)

SIGNS OF CHALLENGES

Addressing the causes of homelessness, in addition to mental, physical, and economic instability, is not a one-size fits all approach.

During the 2020 calendar year, North Dakota agencies served 4,436 unique individuals. Of those individuals served, 528 were veterans, 789 were chronically homeless, and 1,216 reported a mental health problem. Furthermore, 340 individuals reported alcohol abuse, 254 reported drug abuse, and 391 individuals reported both alcohol and drug abuse.



Source: ND Homeless Management Information System

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, a chronically homeless person costs taxpayers \$35,578 per year on average. The 2020 PIT Count had a total count of 92 individuals that were chronically homeless, more than double the count from 2017. Using this average, chronically homeless individuals cost North Dakota taxpayers approximately \$3.3 million dollars in 2020. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) with a Housing First philosophy can reduce that cost by 40 percent. North Dakota currently has 743 PSH beds. Nearly half are set aside for special populations (i.e. veterans, victims of domestic violence, and individuals with HIV/AIDS).



92
Chronically Homeless



\$35,578
cost per person/year

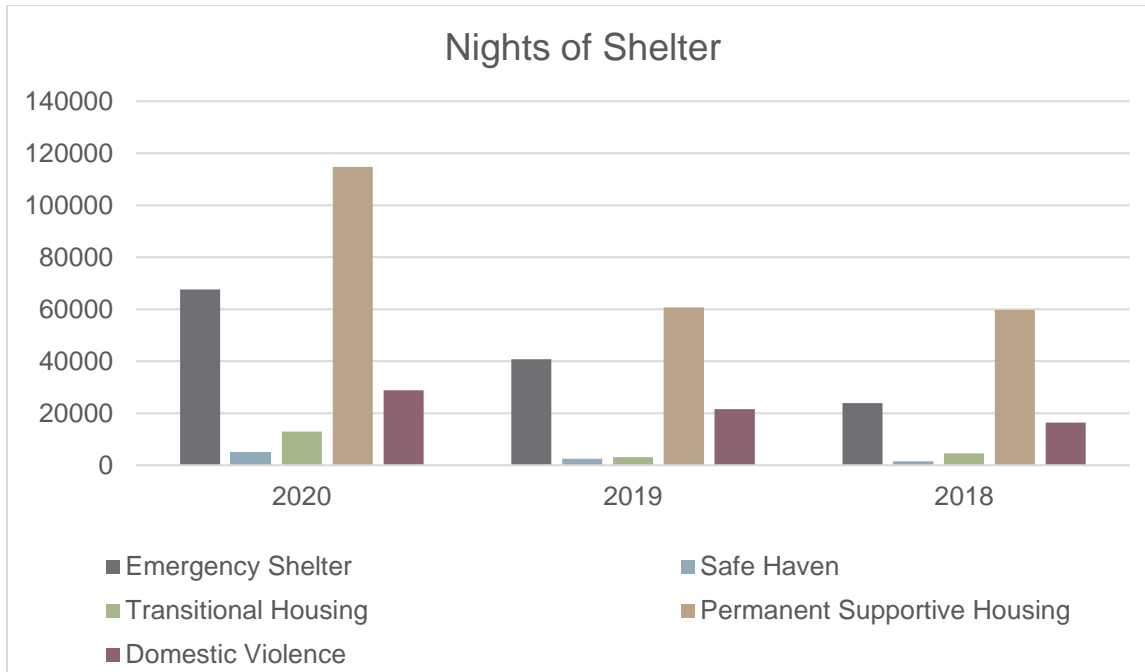


\$3.3 million
a year to North Dakota

State and federal funding continues to be critical for financing permanent supportive housing and supportive services, the proactive approaches to stabilizing individuals and families before reintegrating them into the community.

NIGHTS OF SHELTER

The nights of shelter provided in the state is broken down by emergency shelter, safe haven, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and domestic violence shelters. Overall, in 2020, there were 229,336 nights of shelter with an average length of stay at 120 nights (average does not include domestic violence shelters).



Source: Homeless Management Information System, CAWS, and DV Providers

* NOTE: 2019 and 2018 Domestic violence numbers are not all inclusive of all such shelters in the state.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The Coronavirus pandemic caused many individuals to face job loss or a loss of wages due to reduced employment hours. With this reality, evictions, unpaid utility bills and childcare costs, and food insecurity became issues for many families and individuals.

In March 2020, the ND CoC started tracking the clients who were seeking services due to the pandemic. From March 21 to December 31, 2020, 488 individuals sought services specifically due to the pandemic. In total, 2,875 individuals were served. We believe the number of individuals needing assistance due to the pandemic was higher, but this is the information that we can obtain from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) used in the state. In comparison, 2,264 individuals were served from March 21 to December 31, 2019.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND EVICTIONS

The National Low Income Housing Coalition's Out of Reach report for 2020 shows that to afford rent for a two-bedroom apartment in North Dakota, households would need to earn \$16.18 per hour or work 89 hours per week at the current minimum wage of \$7.25.

NORTH DAKOTA

#41*

In **North Dakota**, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is **\$841**. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities — without paying more than 30% of income on housing — a household must earn **\$2,804** monthly or **\$33,647** annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into an hourly Housing Wage of:

\$16.18
PER HOUR
STATE HOUSING
WAGE

FACTS ABOUT NORTH DAKOTA:

STATE FACTS	
Minimum Wage	\$7.25
Average Renter Wage	\$17.12
2-Bedroom Housing Wage	\$16.18
Number of Renter Households	117,556
Percent Renters	37%

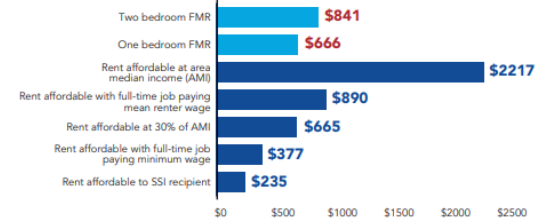
89
Work Hours Per Week At
Minimum Wage To Afford a **2-Bedroom**
Rental Home (at FMR)

71
Work Hours Per Week At
Minimum Wage To Afford a **1-Bedroom**
Rental Home (at FMR)

2.2
Number of Full-Time Jobs At
Minimum Wage To Afford a
2-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)

1.8
Number of Full-Time Jobs At
Minimum Wage To Afford a
1-Bedroom Rental Home (at FMR)

MOST EXPENSIVE AREAS	HOUSING WAGE
Dunn County	\$21.67
McKenzie County	\$19.85
Ward County	\$18.69
Stark County	\$17.69
Williams County	\$17.48



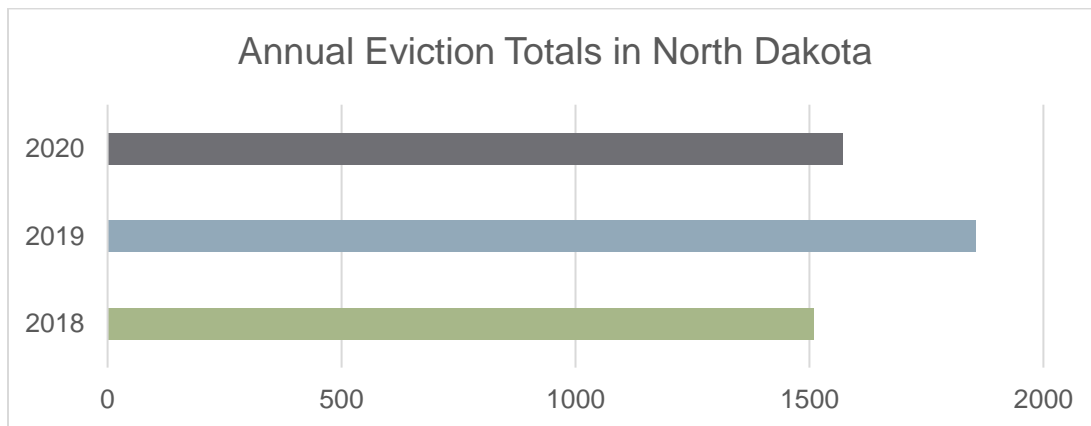
MSA = Metropolitan Statistical Area; HMFA = HUD Metro FMR Area.
* Ranked from Highest to Lowest 2-Bedroom Housing Wage. Includes District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.
OUT OF REACH 2020 | NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION

ND-186

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition (https://reports.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2020.pdf)

The number of evictions that resulted in money judgement orders in 2020 was 1,571. The number of monthly evictions in general has been steadily increasing year over year since 2016 until September 2020.

On September 4, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a public health order barring residential evictions for non-payment of rent. The eviction moratorium was set to expire on December 31, 2020. In January 2021, it was extended through to March 31, 2021. It is expected that eviction numbers will rise once the moratorium is lifted, placing many individuals and families at risk of experiencing homelessness.



Source: ND DHS as reported by the North Dakota Judicial System.

AREAS OF INCREASED FOCUS

RACIAL DISPARITY AND POVERTY LEVELS

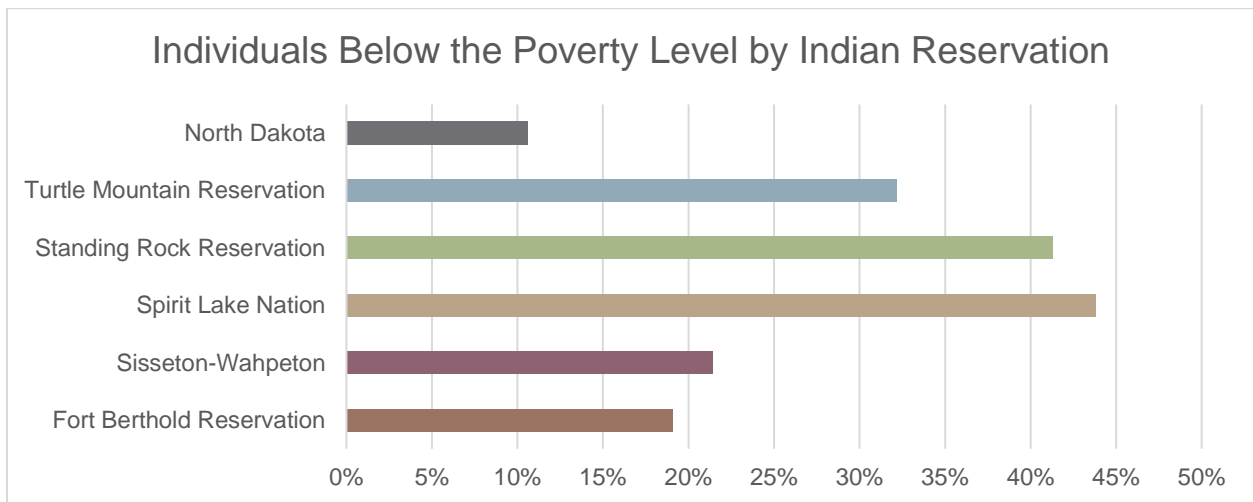
In 2020, racial disparity was brought to the forefront of issues for people experiencing homelessness. North Dakota's total population in 2019 was 762,062 individuals. The breakdown by race and Hispanic origin in North Dakota is as follows:

North Dakota Racial Composition	Total Population (2019)	Experiencing Homelessness (2020)
African American	3.4%	13%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	5.6%	23%
Asian	1.7%	
Hispanic/Latino	4.1%	7%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	83.7%	
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	
White	86.9%	56%
Two or more races	2.3%	
Other		8%

Source: United States Census Bureau, July 1, 2019)

What the table above tells us, is that even though North Dakota has a total population of 5.6 percent American Indian/Alaska Native and 3.4 percent African American, 23 percent of Native Americans and 13 percent of African Americans account for people experiencing homelessness in our state. A norm of the Native American culture is to take in family and other tribal members who are homeless, thus resulting in doubled-up situations. That means the number of Native Americans experiencing homelessness was likely much higher than reported.

North Dakota has an overall poverty rate of 10.6 percent. On the state's Indian reservations, the average rate for the five Native American tribes is 31.6 percent.

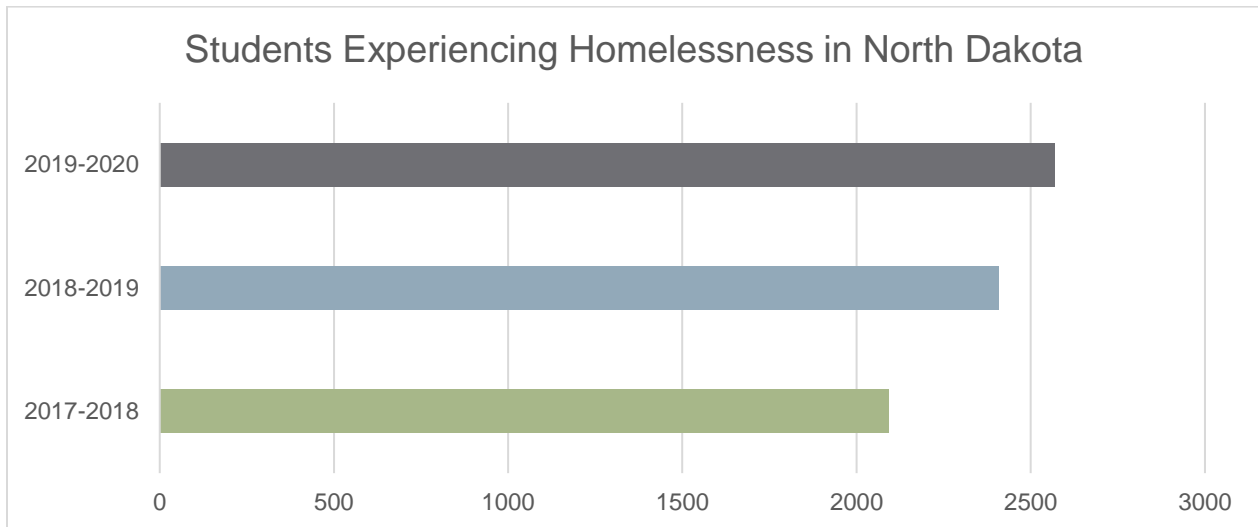


Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
(<https://www.census.gov/tribal/?st=38&aianihh=1160>)

STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

During the 2019-2020 school year, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction reported that 30 percent of students received free or reduced lunches. This was down 2 percent from the 2018-2019 school year.

Students experiencing homelessness in the state has been on the incline the past three years. The McKinney Vento Act allows for students who are doubled up to be counted as homeless, thus making the numbers higher than what is reported in the PIT Count. During the 2019-2020 school year, 2,568 students experienced homelessness, 2,409 students in the 2018-2019 school year, and 2,091 students during the 2017-2018 school year.



Source: ND Department of Public Instruction

DATA AND COORDINATED ENTRY

Tracking individuals and families and providing services is managed through HMIS, which is a mandated database to be used by agencies and organizations that receive funding from the Emergency Solutions Grant, North Dakota Homeless Grant, or CoC. Domestic violence providers are prohibited by law from using the system. If it is mandated by their funding sources, they collect data in a comparable database. The lack of a consistent database, both with government agencies and non-profit organizations, makes it difficult to truly understand the nature of homelessness across the state. While there are areas of the state that have a very robust group of organizations that use HMIS, there are other areas of the state that lack the resources to collect the information.

North Dakota continues to make progress on ways to better serve those that need assistance by working to create a coordinated entry system. The ND CoC has a collaboration with the West Central Minnesota CoC that is the Coordinated Access, Referral, and Evaluation System (CARES). CARES works with the organizations in each region to identify available resources to develop a coordinated entry system. The system works with households on prevention, housing, and stabilization to provide the full spectrum of wrap-around services to individuals and families.