

# 2021 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 2020 Annual 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.

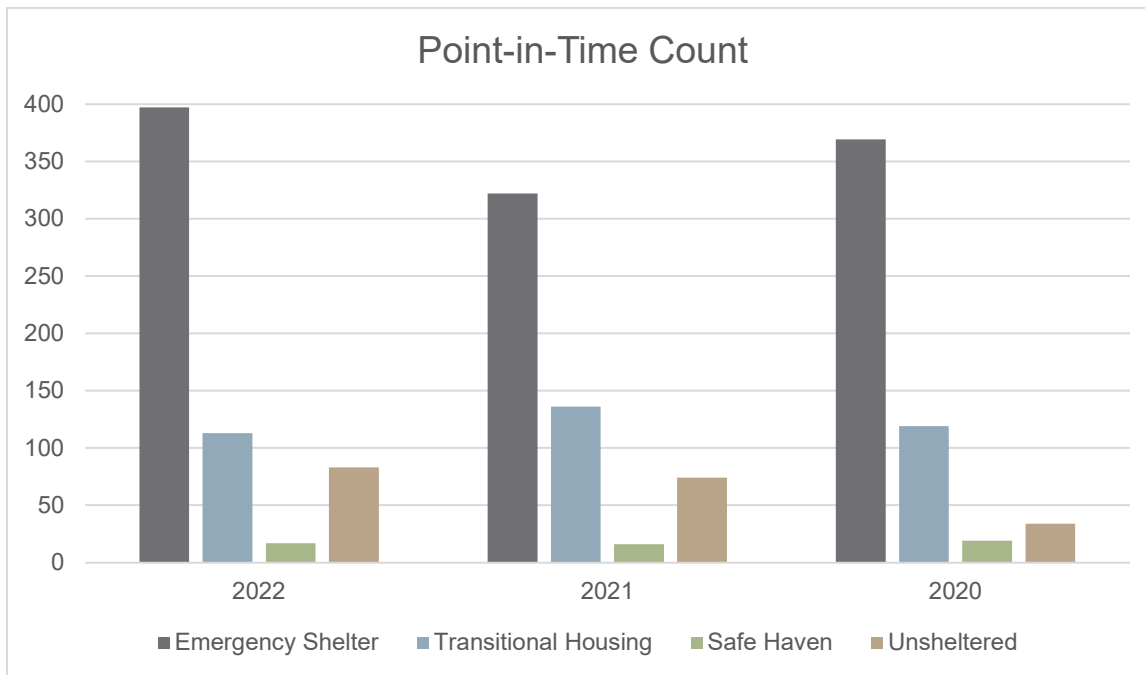
### POINT IN TIME AND HOUSING INVENTORY COUNTS

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).

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.

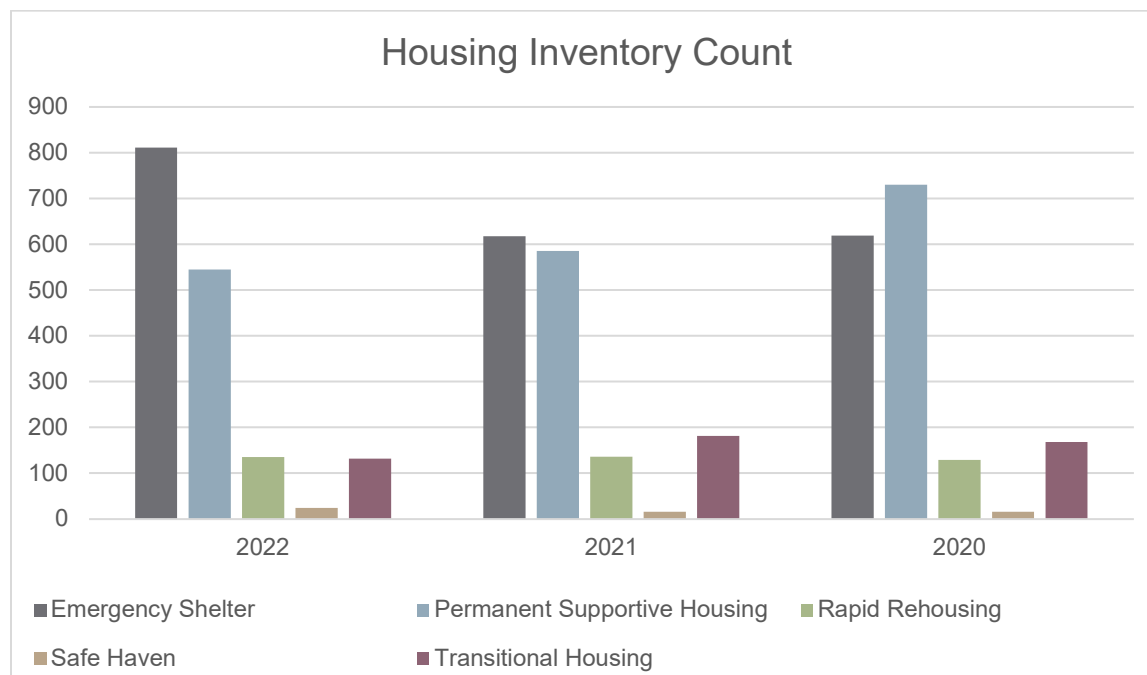
In 2022, the state counted 610 total persons experiencing homelessness during the PIT Count compared to 548 in 2021 and 541 in 2020. The number of homeless individuals in emergency shelter or unsheltered has increased each year.

North Dakota’s extreme weather conditions make it difficult for the count to be successful, which produces a lower count total. In previous years, North Dakota has conducted a summer count for state data purposes. The ND CoC is tentatively planning a summer count in 2023.



Source: HUD Homelessness Data Exchange

The HIC is conducted annually in conjunction with the PIT Count. In 2022 North Dakota reported 1,647 total beds in emergency shelters, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and safe haven as compared to 1,535 in 2021, an increase of 112 beds. The increase in emergency shelter beds, 125 new were reported, was due to COVID-19 funding. Additionally, two congregate shelters were able to open at full capacity – a new shelter in Dunseith, ND, providing 18 new beds and a warming center in Minot, ND, providing 40 new beds. Of the 811 emergency shelter beds, 88 are seasonal, meaning that they are not available year-round.



Source: Homeless Management Information System

While it appears that the number of beds exceeds North Dakota’s need, it is important to remember that the PIT and HIC are one-night counts, not reflective of the ongoing need throughout the year. Often, individuals and families experiencing homelessness do not trust or do not want to stay in a shelter and will choose to double-up or stay in unsafe conditions. Barriers to shelter entry (e.g., sobriety or criminal history) are another reason that individuals are unable to stay at shelters, thus creating a need for additional low-barrier shelters in our state. In total for 2021, over 3,100 individuals were served in emergency shelters, safe havens, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing.

## HOUSING VOUCHERS

Mainstream Housing Vouchers assist non-elderly persons with disabilities. Aside separate funding appropriations and serving a special population, Mainstream Vouchers are administered using the same rules as other Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV). Funding and financial reporting for Mainstream Vouchers is separate from the regular tenant-based voucher program. HUD Notice 2020-22 released a total of 659 vouchers for North Dakota at eight housing authorities. As of July 2022, there are 630 Mainstream Vouchers leased.

Code	Housing Authority	MS Vouchers
ND001	Housing Authority of Cass County	40
ND002	Housing Authority of the City of Williston	16
ND011	Great Plains Housing Authority (Jamestown region)	148
ND012	Grand Forks Housing Authority	165
ND014	Fargo Housing and Redevelopment Authority	195
ND017	Minot Housing Authority	49
ND021	Burleigh County Housing Authority	26
ND031	Stark County Housing Authority	20
<b>Total Mainstream Vouchers</b>		<b>659</b>

Source: [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HCV Dashboard](#)

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers combines HCV rental assistance for Veterans who are homeless with case management and clinical services provided by the VA at its medical centers and community-based outpatient clinics or by VA contractors or VA designated entities. All eligible HUD-VASH families are referred to public housing authorities. Currently there are 220 HUD-VASH vouchers at six housing authorities in North Dakota. As of July 2022, 169 VASH vouchers are leased. Additionally, there are 20 HUD-VASH vouchers at the Turtle Mountain Housing Authority that are not reported on HUD's website.

Code	Housing Authority	VASH Vouchers
ND002	Housing Authority of the City of Williston	25
ND012	Grand Forks Housing Authority	25
ND014	Fargo Housing and Redevelopment Authority	100
ND017	Minot Housing Authority	25
ND021	Burleigh County Housing Authority	25
ND031	Stark County Housing Authority	20
<b>Total VASH Vouchers</b>		<b>220</b>

Source: [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HCV Dashboard](#)

HCV makes up the largest number of vouchers available in North Dakota to assist households who are low-income, elderly or disabled to afford housing in the private market. The vouchers are tenant-based, administered locally by the public housing authority, and the subsidy is paid directly to the housing provider on behalf of the participating household. The household pays the difference between the actual rent charged and the amount subsidized by the program. Thirty housing authorities are issuing over 9,100 vouchers in the state. As of July 2022, there are just over 7,100 vouchers leased.

Code	Housing Authority	HC Vouchers
ND001	Housing Authority of Cass County	470
ND002	Housing Authority of the City of Williston	106
ND003	Rolette County Housing Authority	64
ND009	Towner County Housing Authority	20
ND010	Morton County Housing Authority	684
ND011	Great Plains Housing Authority	709

ND012	Grand Forks Housing Authority	1,281
ND013	North Central Housing Authority	300
ND014	Fargo Housing and Redevelopment Authority	1,713
ND015	Mercer County Housing Authority	30
ND016	Eddy County Housing Authority	55
ND017	Minot Housing Authority	892
ND019	Traill County Housing Authority	39
ND021	Burleigh County Housing Authority	1,124
ND022	Barnes County Housing Authority	218
ND025	Housing Authority of the County of Ransom	92
ND026	Housing Authority of Mountrail County	74
ND030	Benson County Housing Authority	16
ND031	Stark County Housing Authority	395
ND035	Richland County Housing Authority	148
ND036	McKenzie County Housing Authority	33
ND037	Dunn County Housing Authority	49
ND038	LaMoure County Housing Authority	31
ND039	McIntosh County Housing Authority	41
ND044	Pembina County Housing Authority	178
ND049	Walsh County Housing Authority	100
ND052	Dickey/Sargent Counties	104
ND054	Emmons County Housing Authority	4
ND055	McHenry/Pierce County Housing Authority	110
ND070	Northwest Regional Housing Authority	46
<b>Total Housing Choice Vouchers</b>		<b>9,126</b>

Source: [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HCV Dashboard](#)

Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) became available in 2021 through the American Rescue Plan Act and are available to individuals and families who are homeless, at-risk of homelessness, fleeing, or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or were recently homeless or have a high risk of housing instability. HUD mandated housing authorities to use the CoC coordinated entry process to fill vacancies. In North Dakota, 101 vouchers were released to four housing authorities. Currently, 65 vouchers are leased.

Code	Housing Authority	EH Vouchers
ND003	Rolette County Housing Authority	15
ND012	Grand Forks Housing Authority	24
ND014	Fargo Housing and Redevelopment Authority	47
ND030	Benson County Housing Authority	15
<b>Total Emergency Housing Vouchers</b>		<b>101</b>

Source: [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development EHV Dashboard](#)

North Dakota has 75 Non-Elderly Disabled (NED) Vouchers with 71 leased at the Minot Housing Authority. NED Vouchers allow families, who would have been eligible for a public housing unit if occupancy of the unit or entire project had not been restricted to elderly families only through an approved Designated Housing Plan, to receive rental assistance.

Family Unification Program (FUP) Vouchers are available at the Grand Forks Housing Authority (20) and Fargo Housing and Redevelopment Authority (75) for a total of 95 vouchers with 57 leased. FUP Vouchers are available to families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in: (1) the imminent placement of the family’s child or children in out-of-home care, or (2) the delay in the discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care. FUP vouchers may also be used for a period not to exceed 36 months by eligible youth who have attained 18 years and not more than 24 years of age, who have left foster care or will leave foster care within 90 days, and who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

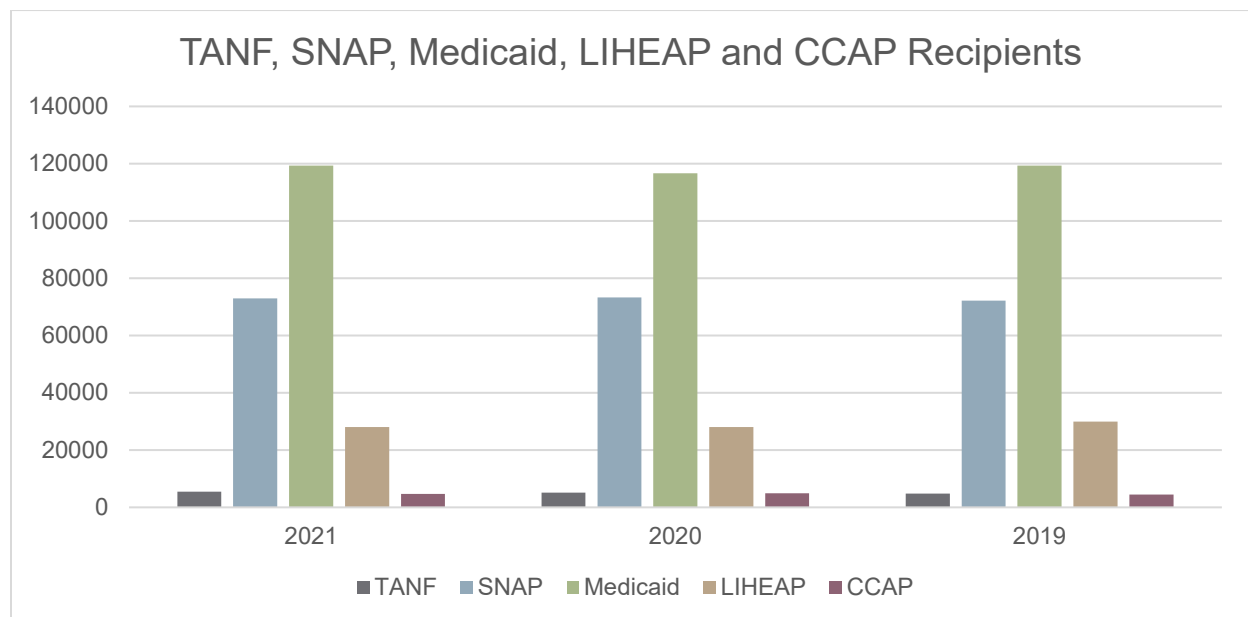
According to the [2022 North Dakota Statewide Housing Needs Assessment](#), due to the inability to find rental options that qualify, housing providers willing to accept vouchers as payment, and the lack of units available in some areas, many voucher recipients are unable to secure housing, thus leaving vouchers unused across the state.

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## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) 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 5,411 recipients in FY 2021. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) aided 72,929 recipients and Medicaid assisted 119,357 individuals in the same time frame. Additionally, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helped 28,050 clients and the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) supported 4,622 clients. Overall, there has been an increase in services from FY 2020 to 2021 of just over 2,300 services with the largest increase in Medicaid.



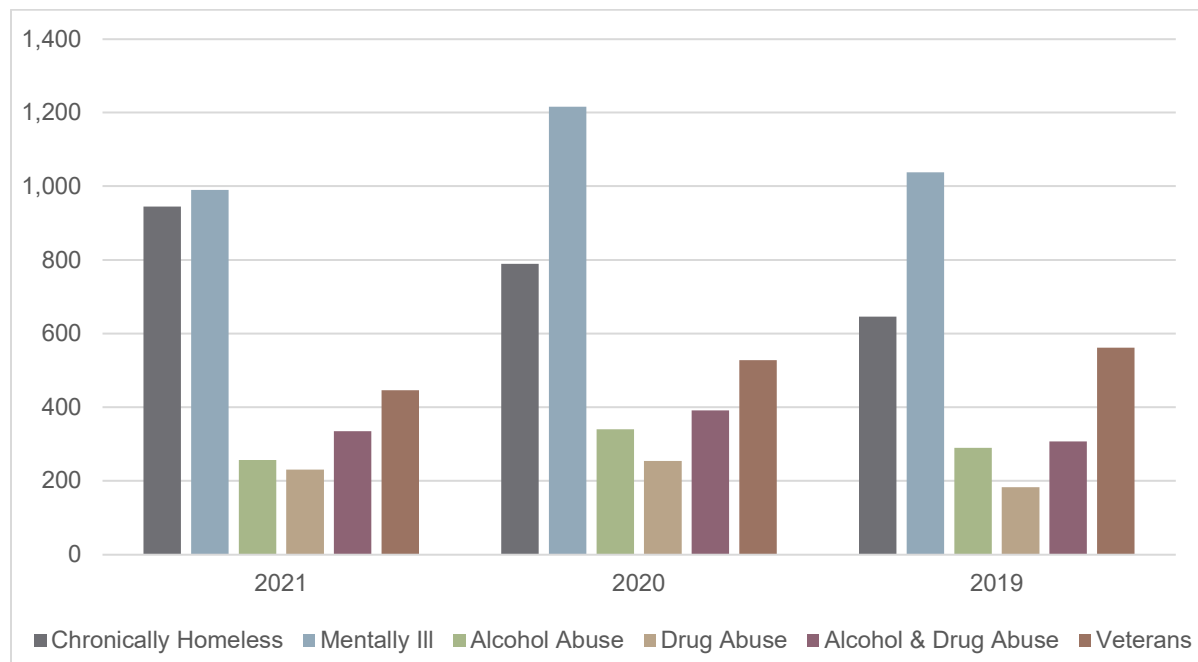
Source: [ND Department of Human Services Unduplicated County Report for Economic Assistance Programs](#)

North Dakota Rent Help, created with funding from the Emergency Rental Assistance Program through the U.S. Department of the Treasury, is also administered by HHS. North Dakota received over \$350 million to assist households who have fallen behind or who are struggling to pay their rent and/or utilities. The program can help cover 12 months of past due, current, and future rent and utility payments for households with a verifiable rental arrangement. In 2021, \$13.7 million was provided to assist North Dakota households.

## 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 2021 calendar year, North Dakota agencies served 4,947 unique individuals. Of those individuals served, 446 were veterans, 945 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 2021 PIT Count had a total count of 132 individuals who were chronically homeless, an increase of 40 individuals from the 2020 PIT Count. Using this average, individuals who are chronically homeless cost North Dakota approximately \$4.7 million dollars in 2021. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) with a Housing First philosophy can reduce that cost by 40%, resulting in a \$1.9 million savings. According to the 2022 HIC, North Dakota currently has 545 PSH beds – 57% are set aside for special populations (i.e., veterans, victims of domestic violence, youth, and individuals with HIV/AIDS) and 40% are for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.





132  
Chronically Homeless



\$35,578  
cost per person/year

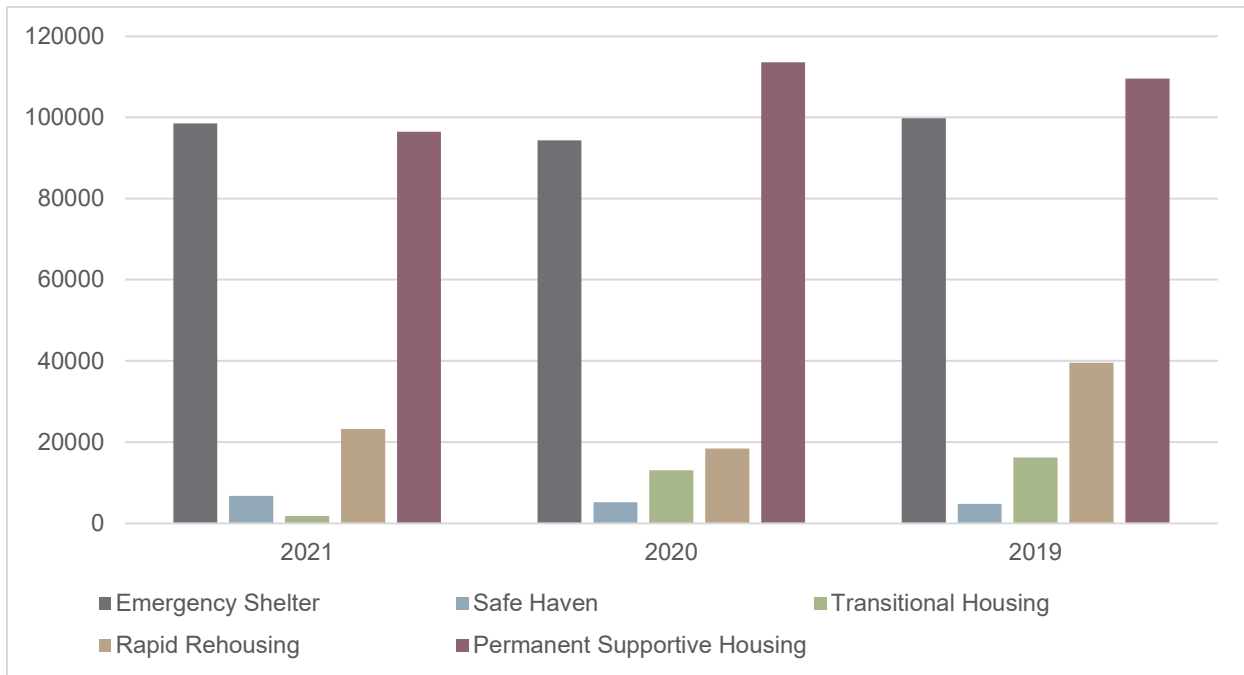


\$4.7 million  
a year to North Dakota

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 to the state. Having continued state and federal funding for PSH beds and supportive services is critical in order to stabilize these individuals and families and to reduce the cost of chronic homelessness.

### NIGHTS OF SHELTER

The nights of shelter provided in the state is broken down by emergency shelter, safe haven, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. Overall, in 2021, there were 226,613 nights of shelter with an average length of stay at 96 nights serving 3,138 households. The following chart does not include households that received assistance from service providers who help victims of domestic violence.



Source: Homeless Management Information System

By HUD mandate, service providers who help victims of domestic violence are not allowed to use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). They must use a comparable database that provides additional security measures for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. These service providers provided 74,358 nights of shelter in 2019, 96,917 nights in 2020, and 118,726 nights in 2021. Youthworks, the only Runaway and Homeless Youth service provider in the state, moved from HMIS to a comparable database in

2021 with funding they receive to help trafficked youth. Due to this change, the number of transitional housing numbers changed significantly. Youthworks data for 2021 is reflected in the data with domestic violence providers.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND EVICTIONS

The National Low Income Housing Coalition’s Out of Reach Report for 2021 shows that to afford rent for a two-bedroom apartment in North Dakota, households need to earn \$16.61 per hour or work 92 hours per week at the current minimum wage of \$7.25. The state housing wage for a two-bedroom apartment in North Dakota increased \$0.43 per hour or \$75 per month from the 2021 report. Households working in Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, along with the average Social Worker or Paraprofessional Teacher are groups who earn this wage or less. When other household expenses (i.e., food, childcare, clothing and transportation) are added, such households experience hardships, living paycheck to paycheck, working just to make ends meet.

# NORTH DAKOTA

#42\*

In **North Dakota**, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is **\$864**. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities — without paying more than 30% of income on housing — a household must earn **\$2,879** monthly or **\$34,552** annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into an hourly Housing Wage of:

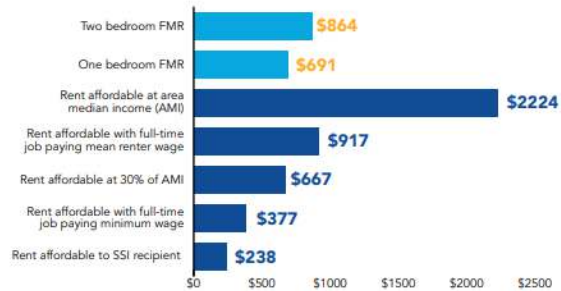
**\$16.61**  
PER HOUR  
STATE HOUSING  
WAGE

### FACTS ABOUT NORTH DAKOTA:

STATE FACTS	
Minimum Wage	\$7.25
Average Renter Wage	\$17.64
2-Bedroom Housing Wage	\$16.61
Number of Renter Households	119,840
Percent Renters	38%



MOST EXPENSIVE AREAS	HOUSING WAGE
McKenzie County	\$20.88
Dunn County	\$20.06
Ward County	\$18.33
Stark County	\$17.96
Williams County	\$17.58

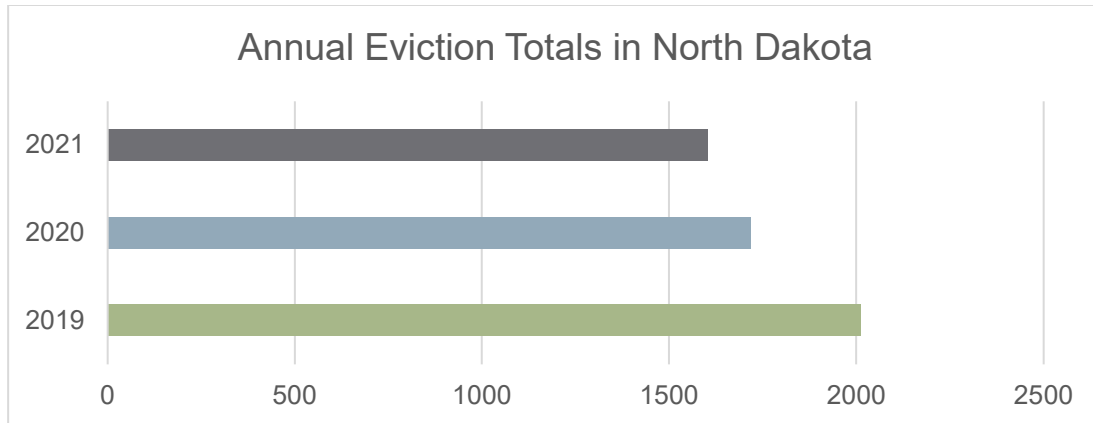


MSA = Metropolitan Statistical Area; HMFA = HUD Metro FMR Area.  
\* Ranked from Highest to Lowest 2-Bedroom Housing Wage. Includes District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.  
OUT OF REACH 2021 | NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION

ND-187

Source: [National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)

The number of evictions that resulted in money judgement orders in 2021 was 1,602. The decrease in evictions in 2020 and 2021 is most likely due to moratoriums and additional rental assistance put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is believed that eviction numbers will rise again as funding for rental assistance will eventually end.



Source: [2022 North Dakota Statewide Housing Needs Assessment](#).

## AREAS OF INCREASED FOCUS

### RACIAL DISPARITY AND POVERTY LEVELS

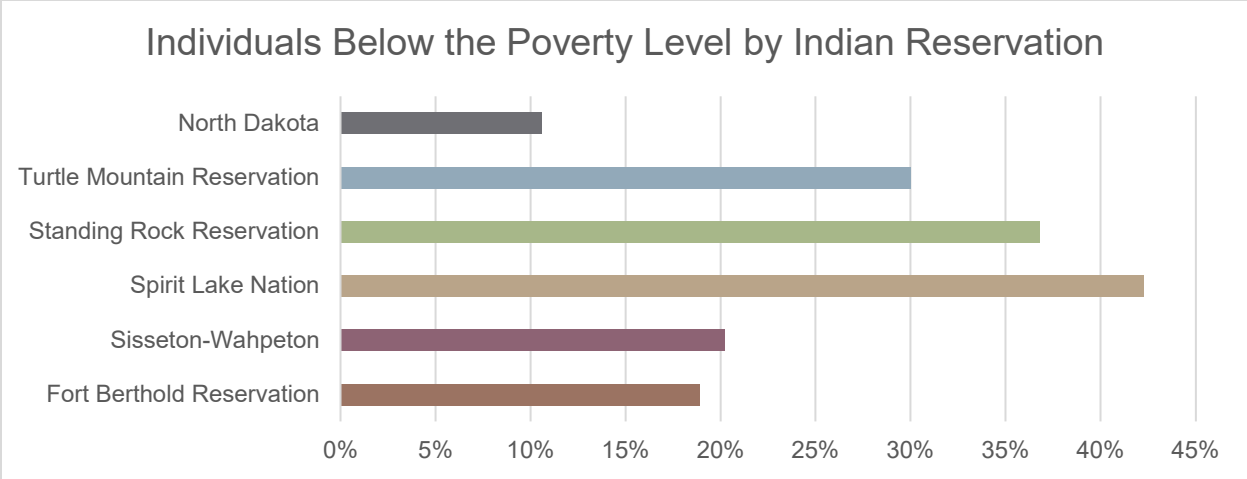
In 2020, racial disparity was brought to the forefront of issues for people experiencing homelessness. North Dakota’s total population in 2020 was 779,094 individuals. The breakdown by race and ethnicity in North Dakota is as follows:

North Dakota Racial Composition	Total Population (2020)	Experiencing Homelessness (2021)
<b>Black or African American</b>	3.4%	14%
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native</b>	5.0%	23%
<b>Asian</b>	1.7%	
<b>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	0.1%	
<b>White</b>	82.9%	55%
<b>Two or more races</b>	5.4%	
<b>Other</b>	1.5%	8%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	4.3%	8%
<b>Non-Hispanic/Latino</b>	95.7%	92%

Source: [United States Census Bureau](#); ND Homeless Management Information System Racial Equity Report

Even though North Dakota’s population is only 5% American Indian and Alaska Native and 3.4% Black or African American, 23% of Native Americans and 14% of Black or African Americans experience homelessness in the state. As a norm of the Native American culture is to take in family and other tribal members who are homeless, resulting in doubled-up living situations. That means the number of Native Americans experiencing homelessness is likely much higher than reported.

North Dakota had an overall poverty rate of 11.1% in 2021. On the state’s Indian reservations, the average poverty rate for the five Native American tribes is 26%.

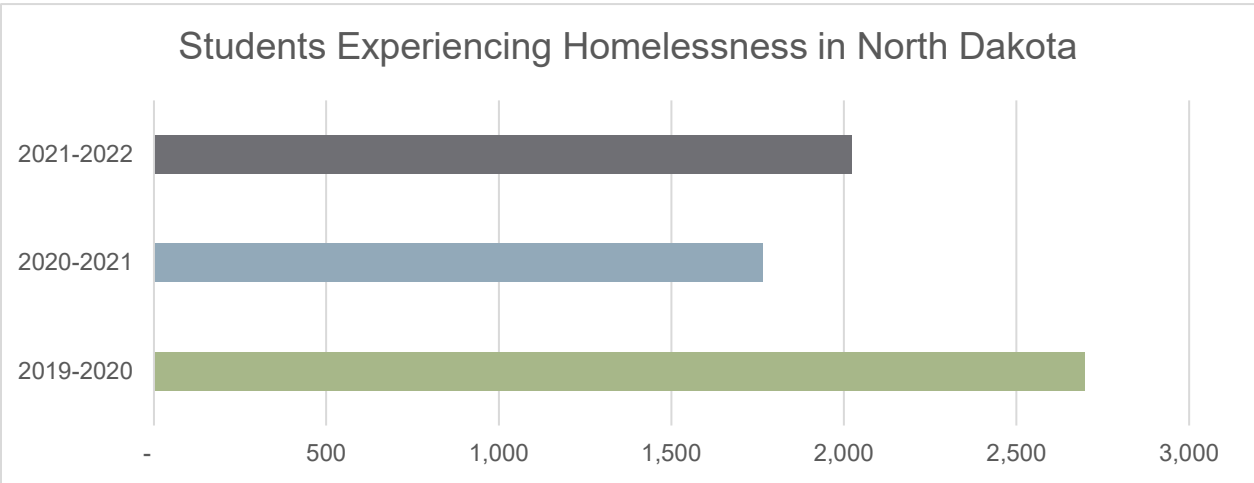


Source: [2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#)

### STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

During the 2021-22 and 2020-21 school years, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction was not able to report the percentage of students enrolled in free or reduced lunches as 100% of school lunches were covered by COVID-19 funding.

Students experiencing homelessness in the state declined in the 2020-21 school year. It is believed that this decrease can be attributed to schools moving to virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, making it more difficult to track students who are experiencing a housing crisis. The McKinney Vento Act allows for students who are doubled up to be counted as homeless making the numbers higher than what is reported in the PIT Count. During the 2021-22 school year, 2,021 students experienced homelessness. During the 2020-21 school year, 1,764 students experienced homelessness. During the 2019-20 school year, 2,697 students experienced homelessness. Regions 1 (Williston), 5 (Fargo), and 7 (Bismarck) had the highest reporting schools with 464 students, 534 students, and 416 students respectively. Region 3 (Devils Lake) reported 206 students and Region 2 (Minot) reported 109 students.



Source: ND Department of Public Instruction

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## DATA AND COORDINATED ENTRY

Tracking of individuals and families and the services provided 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. Service providers working with victims of domestic violence are prohibited by law from using the system. If it is mandated by their funding sources that they collect data in a comparable database. The lack of a consistent databases, 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 the 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 to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations on how we, as a state, can work together towards the goal of ending homelessness:

1. Inventory state and federal programs that provide economic stability and housing stability supports. Develop efficiencies among state agencies and nonprofit providers that provide the same types of services and expand on current processes to better serve vulnerable populations.
2. Identify databases and data elements collected in each database related to homelessness. Using the HMIS, comparable databases and state databases, create a data warehouse that provides a clearer picture of homelessness in our state.
3. Evaluate ND Interagency Council on Homelessness's purpose and membership to ensure economic assistance, education assistance, and other service provided by the state are delivered in an efficient and effective manner.