



## ***Senate Bill 2012***

Senate Appropriations Committee  
Senator Brad Bekkedahl, Chairman

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Economic Assistance Section | January 16, 2023

NORTH  
**Dakota**  
Be Legendary.

Health & Human Services

# Who we serve

Economic Assistance Programs help North Dakotans struggling to make ends meet by connecting them to resources that can help meet their basic needs, preventing greater and more damaging crises.



# Economic Assistance Programs and Services



## Child Care Assistance

Pay a portion of the cost of childcare for working families or families in training or education programs.



## Housing Stability

Assist renters struggling to pay rent and utilities and homeowners at risk of housing instability with financial assistance to support housing costs.



## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

Provide nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food.



## Home Energy Assistance

Help households with home heating costs by paying a portion of their heating bills and assisting with home modifications to support energy efficiency.



## Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Serve families with children who are deprived of parental support or care due to divorce, separation, death or one or both parents being aged or disabled.



## Long-Term Care Eligibility

Determine Medicaid eligibility for individuals seeking Long-Term Care, Basic Care and Home & Community Based Services.

# Additional support to families



## Nutrition Education

Provide SNAP eligible individuals with nutrition education focusing on:

- Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption
- Balancing healthful food with physical activity
- Helping families get the most nutrition for their food dollar



## Work support

- Help individuals who are able to work take meaningful steps to achieve greater self sufficiency.
- Resources to help with costs associated with seeking and maintaining employment, such as child care, transportation, vehicle repairs, insurance, uniforms and certifications.



## Home energy modifications

Offer weatherization services such as:

- Insulating, weather stripping and chimney cleanings
- Minor furnace and cooling device repair
- Replacement of inefficient or inoperable heating systems

# Connecting Families to Economic Assistance is a Partnership

The state and Human Service Zones (HSZs) work together to deliver help to low and moderate-income families

## Human Service Zone

The applicant can contact their human service zone directly or they can simply apply online.

## Determine eligibility

An eligibility worker determines eligibility.



## Person decides to apply

Making ends meet is getting more difficult every month so the applicant makes the decision to reach out for help.

## Gather information

The applicant can enter as much info as they can in the SPACES self-service portal.

## Issue benefits

If the applicant is eligible to receive assistance, the state will issue the benefit in the appropriate manner.

# HHS and HSZs connected 1 in 5 NDs to at least one resource designed to support their economic health and wellbeing

# 154,000

North Dakotans utilized SPACES to access Economic Assistance and Medicaid coverage during SFY 2022

**74,817 people in 36,076 households**



Food Assistance

**5,937 children in 3,610 families**



Child Care Assistance

**4,613 people in 1,729 households**



Temporary Assistance

**30,408 people in 14,023 households**



Home Energy Assistance

**141,051 people in 82,180 households**



Medicaid Coverage

**35,717 people in 19,385 households**  
(from 01/21 through 12/22)



Housing Stability Assistance

**5,585 households experiencing homelessness**  
(from 09/21 through 12/22)

# Working Better Together

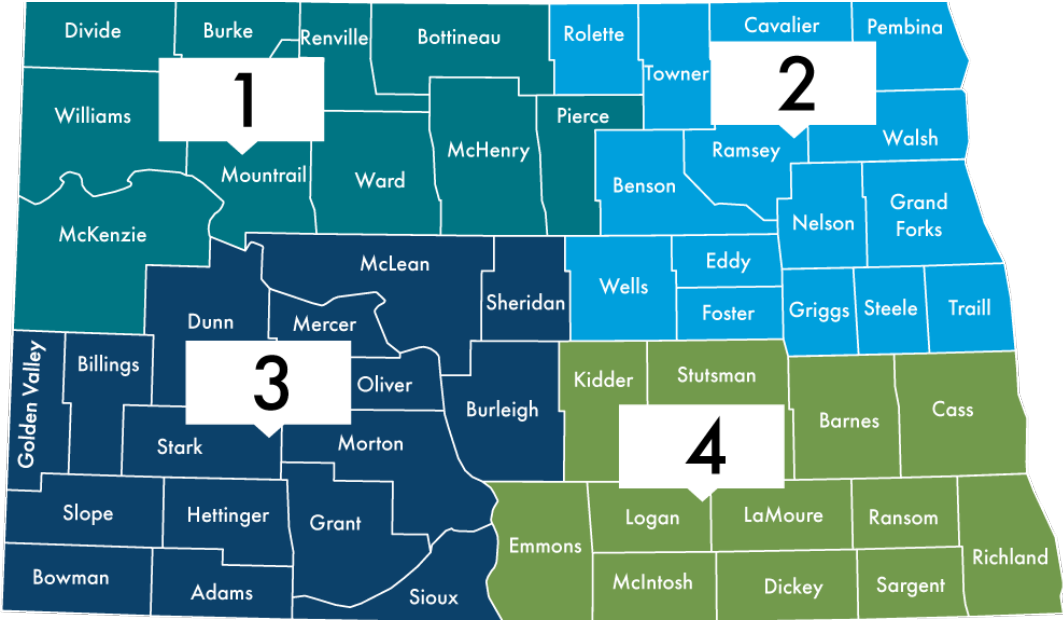


Health and Human Services and Human Service Zones have worked together to redesign the delivery of eligibility determination that supports Economic Assistance and Medicaid coverage.

## **GOALS OF REDESIGN:**

- Level the workload so each worker has the capacity to handle the volume and the complexity.
- Process applications in a timely manner.
- Simplify the process to serve customers efficiently.
- Decrease errors and issue all the benefits a family is eligible to receive at the right time.

# Redesign Implementation: February 2023



## Four Regions – Each Working as One Team

Human Service Zones in each region will work together as one team.



## Local Support

Local offices will remain open for in-person support.



## Customer Support Center

One phone number to speak to an expert in eligibility services.



## Centralized Mail Unit

One mail and one email address for document submission.



## Self-Service Portal Upgrade

Work has been done on the SSP to make it more user and mobile friendly.



# Improving the lives of North Dakotans

How legislative support and  
appropriations made an impact in  
the **2021-2023 biennium**



# Child Care Assistance Program Milestones



## **March 2021**

Utilize COVID funds to waive family co-pays and pay providers based on maximum state rates.



## **November 2022**

Transitioned to a prospective payment model. This allows for assistance payments to occur at the beginning of the month based on the child's enrollment.

Prior to this change, reimbursement was made the month after care.



## **February 2022**

Increased the eligibility limit to 85% of State Median Income.

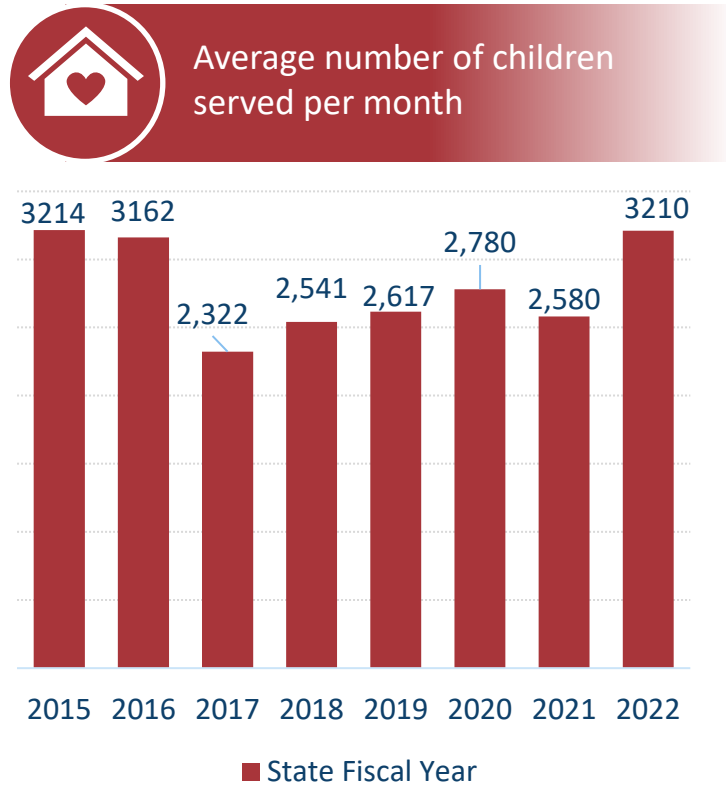


## **November 2022**

Enhanced the provider portal in SPACES to:

- Allow for prospective payments
- Provide payment via direct deposit
- Eliminate paper billing forms
- Allows provider to access their account via a mobile device

# Child Care Assistance Program Impact



Impact for ND families with income up to 85% of State Median Income

SFY 2022

\$28.5 million

Support to families

\$741

Average payment per child per month

3,210

Average number of children served per month



Find the NDHHS Child Care Assistance Data Dashboard online at: [www.hhs.nd.gov/applyforhelp/ccap](http://www.hhs.nd.gov/applyforhelp/ccap)

# Home Energy Assistance Program Milestones



## **September 2021**

Integrated LIHEAP eligibility determination into SPACES.

\*Represented the final step to fully integrate eligibility determinations for all Economic Assistance and Medicaid programs.



## **July 2022**

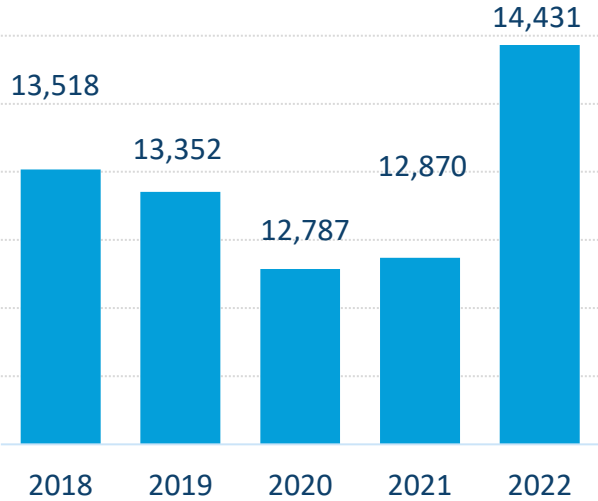
Expanded the cooling assistance program in 2022 to include all LIHEAP eligible families. Program provides cooling devices.



# LIHEAP PROGRAM IMPACT



Total households served per heating season



■ Heating Season (October - May)



Impact for ND families with income up to 60% of State Median Income

### 2022 Heating Season

- \$15.8 million** Support to households
- \$1,086** Average payment per household per heating season
- 14,431** Households served

# SNAP PROGRAM MILESTONES

## **School Years 19-20 and 20-21**

Operated a Pandemic EBT Program, providing SNAP benefits to children eligible for free or reduced-price meals who missed those meals due to school closures or virtual learning.



## **Summer PEBT 2022 & planned for 2023**

Operated a summer Pandemic EBT Program, providing SNAP benefit to school age children and children in child care with additional assistance to help families with food and nutrition costs.



## **October 2021**

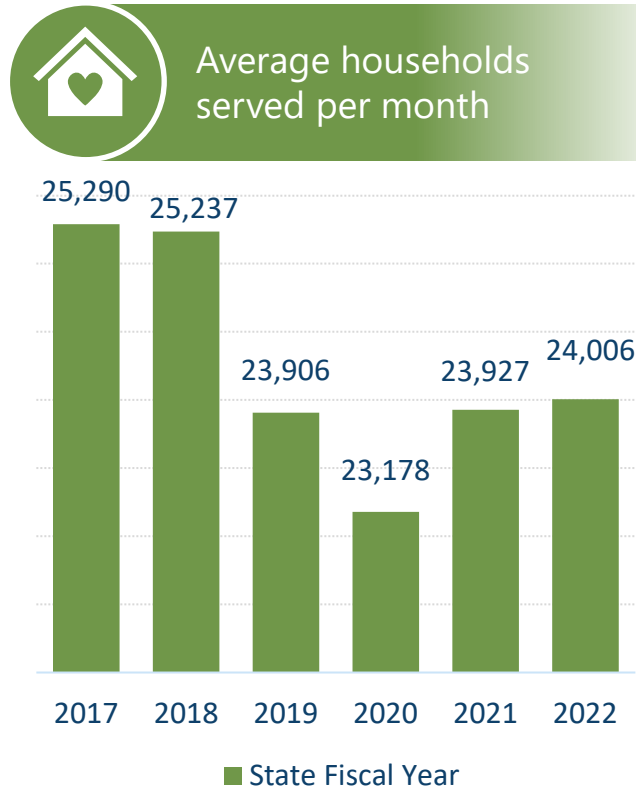
Implemented a 27% increase in the SNAP benefit level based on a Federal increase in the Thrifty Food Plan.



## **February 2022**

Implemented a third-party earned income verification system, streamlining eligibility determinations and reducing burden on families. This was made possible through a federal SNAP data grant award.

# SNAP PROGRAM IMPACT



Impact for ND families with income up to 60% of State Median Income

## SFY 2022

**\$93.8 million**

Support to households

**\$326**

Average payment per household per month

**48,391**

Average number of individuals served in 24,006 households

# TANF PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

## What We Learned



### Financial Support

Suggestions include:

- Increase TANF grant to create a more impactful benefit
- Increase Post & Transitional Assistance
- Expand financial management skills and education



### Administrative Barriers

Suggestions include:

- Eliminate pay-after-performance policy
- Eliminate monthly reporting and streamline the application process
- Remove benefit cap policy



### Support Services

Suggestions include:

- Better options for delivering support services – electronic or direct deposit
- Increase transportation allowance
- Consider alternative approaches for rural communities



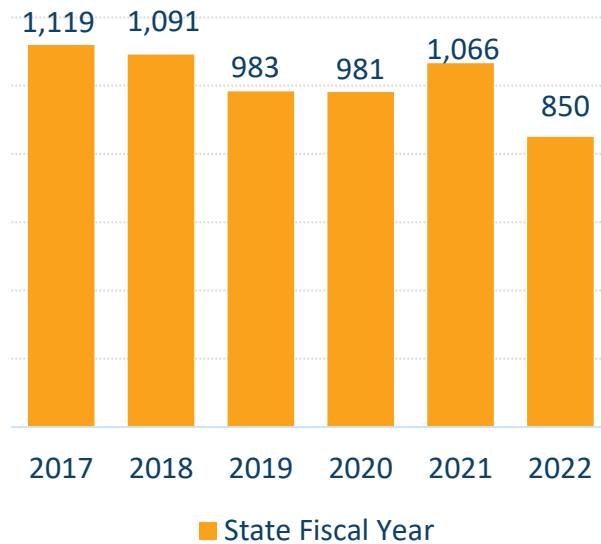
### Support from Workers

Suggestions include:

- Training
- Strength-based coaching
- Caseworkers to meet client where they are at



# TANF PROGRAM IMPACT



Impact for ND families with income at less than 10% of State Median Income

## SFY 2022

**81%** Of beneficiaries are children

**\$300** Average payment per family

**1,921** Average number of individuals served in 850 families

# HOUSING STABILITY PROGRAM MILESTONES



## August 2021

Added utility assistance for ND Renters



## October 2021

Implemented an enhanced application portal and specialized process for households experiencing homelessness.



## May 2022

NW ND Emergency Housing Stability storm response (temporary program)



## June 2022

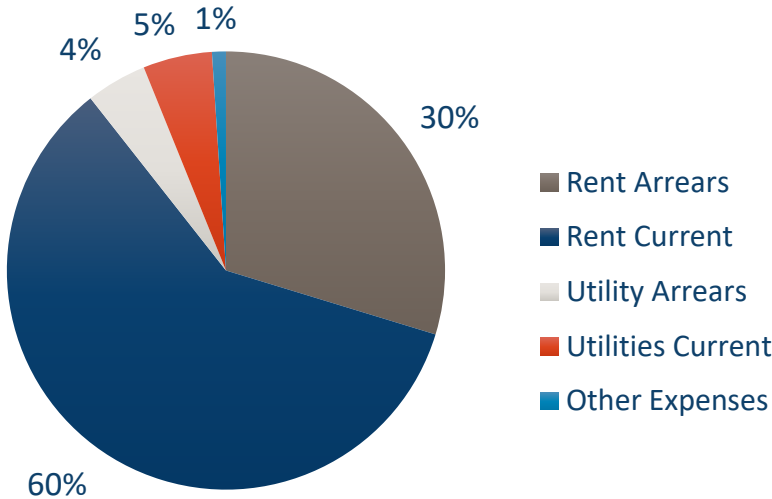
Launch of ND Homeowner Assistance Fund



# HOUSING STABILITY PROGRAM IMPACT



Financial Assistance by Category



Impact for ND families with income up 80% of Area Median Income

January 2020-December 2022

**\$78 million** Support to households

**\$731** Average assistance per household per month

**19,588** Households assisted



Find the NDHHS Housing Stability Data Dashboard online at: <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/applyforhelp/rent-help>



# 2023-2025 Budget request

The **program, systems and workforce support** necessary to continue to serve North Dakotans

# Economic Assistance: Overview of budget changes

Description	2021 - 2023 Budget Base		Increase/ (Decrease)	2023 - 2025 Executive Budget		
Salaries and Benefits	\$	7,491,381	\$	2,625,709	\$	10,117,090
Operating		10,049,033		(276,783)		9,772,250
IT Services		4,389		9,611		14,000
Grants		257,416,610		122,726,053		380,142,663
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>274,961,413</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>125,084,590</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>400,046,003</b>

<b>General Fund</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>11,831,644</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>45,625,238</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>57,456,882</b>
<b>Federal Funds</b>		<b>243,692,453</b>		<b>78,295,988</b>		<b>321,988,441</b>
<b>Other Funds</b>		<b>19,437,316</b>		<b>1,163,364</b>		<b>20,600,680</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>274,961,413</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>125,084,590</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>400,046,003</b>

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)		49.80		-		49.80
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# Economic Assistance: Overview of budget changes

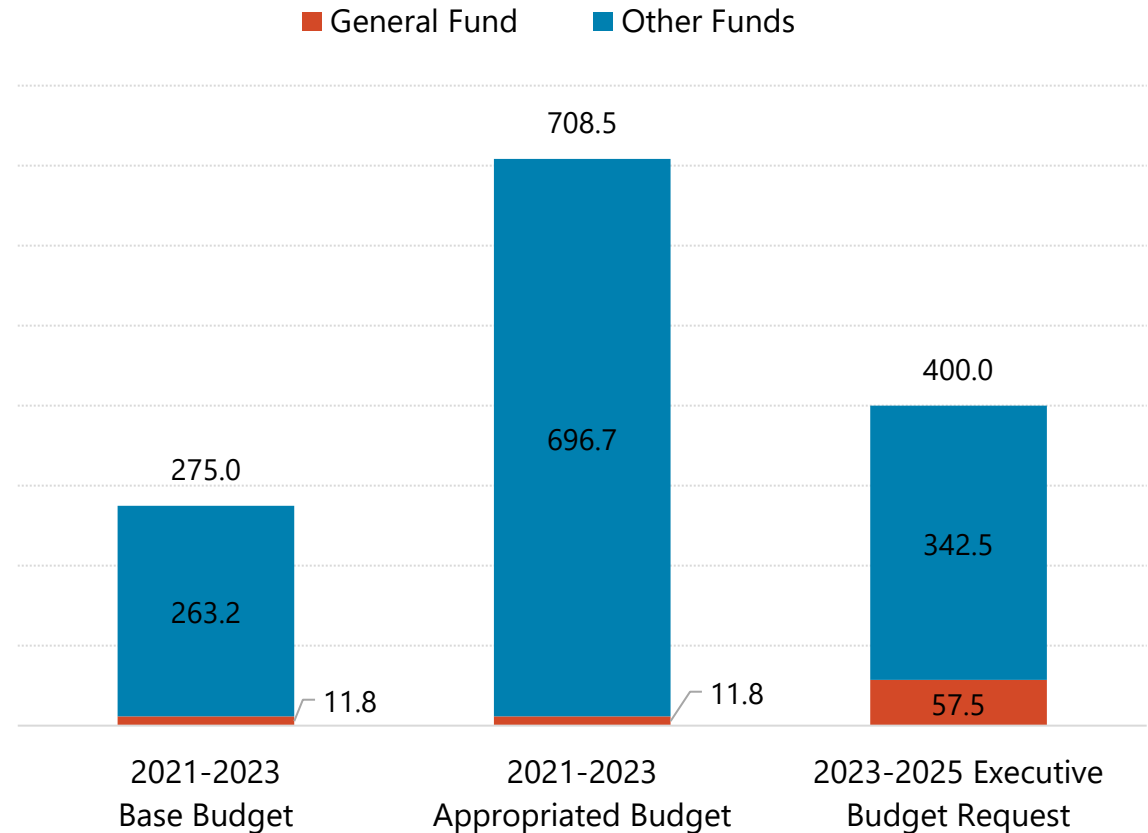
(IN MILLIONS)

## INCREASE FROM BASE TO EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION \$ 125 MILLION

2021-23 Appropriated Budget includes \$433.5 million in time-limited COVID relief funds

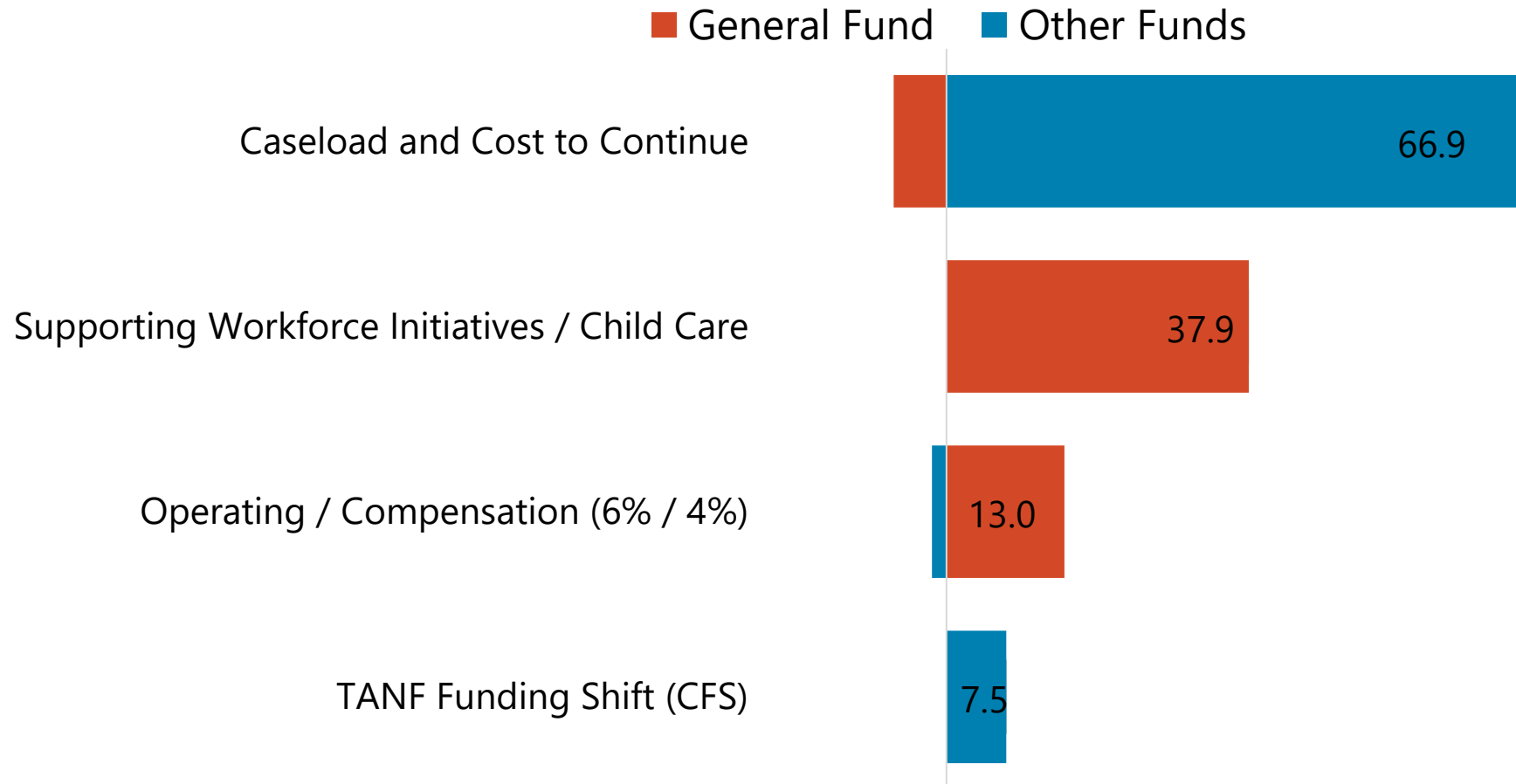
### 2023-25 Executive Budget Request

- +\$2.6 M salaries and - \$275K in operating
- +\$66.9 M cost to continue (grants), including \$55.6 M SNAP and \$6.6 M LIHEAP
- +\$7.5 M TANF (shift from CFS)
- +\$37.9 M child care assistance (child care / workforce proposal)



# Economic Assistance: Overview of budget changes

(IN MILLIONS)





# Contact information

## Michele Gee

Director, Economic Assistance Section

[mgee@nd.gov](mailto:mgee@nd.gov)

[www.hhs@nd.gov/applyforhelp](http://www.hhs@nd.gov/applyforhelp)



# Appendix: Comparison of the 2021 state median income (SMI) and the federal poverty level

Household Size	Federal Poverty Level		30% SMI		60% SMI		100% SMI	
	Annual Income	Hourly Wage	Annual Income	Hourly Wage	Annual Income	Hourly Wage	Annual Income	Hourly Wage
1	\$ 12,880	\$6.19	\$ 16,238	\$ 7.81	\$ 32,475	\$ 15.61	\$ 54,125	\$ 26.02
2	\$ 17,420	\$8.38	\$ 21,233	\$ 10.21	\$ 42,467	\$ 20.42	\$ 70,778	\$ 34.90
3	\$ 21,960	\$10.56	\$ 26,230	\$ 12.61	\$ 52,460	\$ 25.22	\$ 87,433	\$ 42.04
4	\$ 26,500	\$12.74	\$ 31,226	\$ 15.01	\$ 62,452	\$ 30.03	\$ 104,087	\$ 50.04
5	\$ 31,040	\$14.92	\$ 36,222	\$ 17.41	\$ 72,444	\$ 34.83	\$ 120,740	\$ 58.05
6	\$ 35,580	\$17.11	\$ 41,219	\$ 19.82	\$ 82,437	\$ 39.63	\$ 137,395	\$ 66.06
7	\$ 40,120	\$19.29	\$ 42,155	\$20.26	\$ 84,310	\$ 40.53	\$ 140,517	\$ 67.56
8	\$ 44,660	\$21.47	\$ 43,092	\$ 20.72	\$ 86,184	\$ 41.43	\$ 143,640	\$ 69.06

# Appendix: Occupations by Average Wage

71% of jobs in the ND labor market pay an average wage of \$28/hour or less



Less than \$13 / hr	\$13 - \$20 / hour	\$20 - \$28 / hour	\$28 - \$35 / hour	>\$35 / hour
Waiter/Waitress Child care worker Dishwasher Bartender Cafeteria worker Short order cook Cashiers Veterinary Assistant	Pharmacy tech Home health PT assistant Hair stylist Retail Farmworker Restaurant cook Data entry EMTs & paramedics Carpet installers Maintenance workers Nursing assistant Laborer Substitute teacher Extraction helper	Carpenter Loan processor Legal secretary Correctional officers Auto service tech Surgical tech Roofer Lic Practical Nurse Dental assistant Firefighter Surgical assistant Clergy Social worker Police Hotel manager Truck driver	School counselor Rotary drill operator HR specialist Accountant Real Estate Sales PR specialist Counselor Registered Nurse Comp network specialist Construction supervisor Dental hygienist Architectural drafter Speech pathologist	Engineer Constr mgr Electrician Lineman Gen/Op mgr Loan officer Lawyer Sales Software dev Veterinarian Pharmacist Physician Dentist Psychologist
<p><b>70,770</b></p> <p># of people employed in a job with average wage of &lt;\$13/hour</p> <p><i>represents 10% of total jobs</i></p>	<p><b>219,490</b></p> <p><i>31%</i></p>	<p><b>215,200</b></p> <p><i>30%</i></p>	<p><b>90,740</b></p> <p><i>13%</i></p>	<p><b>114,730</b></p> <p><i>16%</i></p>

Source: Job Service ND 2020 Employment and Wages by Occupation dataset | mean wage by occupation; 710,910 jobs included in wage summary