

# Project Startup Report

Submitted to Project Oversight on 10/08/2021

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Project Name:** North Dakota Rent Help (NDRH)

**Agency Name:** Human Services

**Project Sponsor:** Jessica Thomasson

**Project Manager:** Jim Bauer

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Congress approved funding for emergency rent assistance in both the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation (CRRSA) and American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) COVID relief packages. North Dakota was allocated \$200 million via CRRSA and \$152 million via ARPA to be distributed via a statewide Rental Assistance program; there are no North Dakota local jurisdiction awards in the Act. The program will provide rent payments to housing providers on behalf of low income and moderate households, including payment of rent arrears and future rent. The State has contracted with Deloitte Consulting LLP to implement a renter portal, a housing provider portal, a case management portal, and work flow that can support community-based application counselors who will work directly with renters to complete applications, and facilitate necessary integrations with State and other third-party systems needed for applicant documentation, payment management, eligibility review, and general program reporting.

## BUSINESS NEEDS AND PROBLEMS

North Dakota is receiving funding from U.S. Treasury as part of two COVID relief and recovery packages, to assist renters in our state who have experienced negative household impacts during the COVID pandemic and who are struggling to maintain stable housing. To effectively serve renters and housing providers in our state, DHS needs to have the means and ability to connect with renters and housing providers, gather the documentation needed to complete applications for assistance, review documentation to determine eligibility, distribute payments regularly and accurately, and track programmatic data associated with the programs.

Housing assistance is distributed by DHS as part of a broader effort to help encourage greater household stability and economic wellbeing. In addition to housing related assistance, DHS delivers COVID recovery supports to tens of thousands of North Dakotans through its economic assistance and behavioral health programs.

There is a need to procure a system that will facilitate the distribution of emergency rental assistance and housing stability supports.

## PROJECT BASELINES

Project Start Date	Baseline End Date	Baseline Budget	Funding Source
3/23/2021	1/31/2022	\$6,000,000	Federal

**Notes:**

## OBJECTIVES

Business Objective	Measurement Description
<p>ND renters are less likely to experience housing instability that progress to housing crisis (i.e., eviction) because of the rental assistance and stability supports made available by ND Rent Help</p>	<p>Increase in number of renters who engage with a housing facilitator to develop a plan for housing stability, as measured monthly by the number of referrals that are documented in the ND Rent Help system to ND Rent Help housing facilitators within 60 days of deploying the system. Goal is for 75% of identified referrals to successfully connect within 60 days of initial referral. Secondary goal is for 50% of referral connections made to continue past 120 days.</p>
<p>ND housing providers are able to avoid court action in the case of nonpayment due to greater adoption of eviction prevention practices.</p>	<p>Increase in number of housing providers who participate in emergency rental assistance program as measured monthly by the number of housing providers who activate accounts in the system, and by the number of housing units they are responsible for managing. Measurement to begin within 60 days of deploying the system. Goal is measured by number of housing providers enrolling by geography served, and by the number of renter applications whose approval is delayed due to lack of engagement by the housing provider.</p>

## KEY CONSTRAINTS AND/OR RISKS

- Connection to the Unemployment system will be delayed beyond the original timeframe due to NDIIT Unemployment resource constraints. Mitigation will be to use an existing interface to perform manual queries as needed until an automated solution can be performed.
- If there are delays in access to the Dynamics Test and Production environments, this may result in scheduling delays. Requirements Re-Certification component must be confirmed to integrate into data conversion plan. Mitigation will be to work with NDIIT to grant access to Dynamics environments without MFA enabled and to provide any Re-Certification requirements needed for notification to occur in the portal.
- Given the short time frame of this project, any delays in preceding deliverables could have a downstream impact on training and delivery timelines; Implementation is dependent on the completion of the implementation plan tasks. Mitigation is to hold implementation planning session earlier and closely coordinate between Deloitte and the State to ensure completion of all tasks associated with this Implementation plan well ahead of deployment.