

Looking Ahead: What The Loss Of Crucial Funding Will Mean For Crime Victims In North Dakota

By Seth O'Neil and Greg Kasowski
In a perfect world, crime would not exist. But we don't live in a perfect world, at least not yet.

Last year, our organizations helped more than 10,000 victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child sexual abuse and human trafficking. Our role is to support these survivors through some of the toughest, most traumatizing moments of their lives.

The federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), and through it, the Crime Victims Fund (CVF), has helped us do this crucial work for decades. VOCA supports thirty-seven crime victim service providers in North Dakota, and it does so without using federal taxpayer dollars. Through this critical funding, victims of domestic violence have gotten legal support to protect them from their abuser. Children have received free services to help them heal after sexual abuse. Victims of human trafficking have received justice and protection from their traffickers.

However, the CVF has been steadily declining for several years. The fund lacks stability, as it relies on inconsistent revenue sources such as fines, legal settlements, and forfeited bail from federal cases. This instability means that services fluctuate based on the amount of funding available.

Last year, the North Dakota's Legislative Assembly generously appropriated a supplemental \$7 million to our state's VOCA fund, which has stabilized our programs and ensured we can provide uninterrupted services to child and adult victims until next year. We are grateful to state lawmakers and the Armstrong Administration for understanding our duty to take care of crime victims.

However, the state funding is only a temporary fix. To solve this problem in the long term, we must make improvements at the federal level, and the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act of 2025 (CVFSA)

gives us time to do that. This vital legislation will help us maintain current service levels nationwide while allowing more time for the CVF to close the funding gap.

Thank you to Congresswoman Julie Fedorchak and the 326 bipartisan House members who co-sponsored the CVFSA, ensuring its passage recently. In the Senate, seven Republicans and eight Democrats have co-sponsored the CVFSA, highlighting its broad appeal. We encourage Senators Cramer and Hoeven to continue their long-standing support for victims of crime by joining their colleagues in cosponsoring the CVFSA.

The uncertainty in the Crime

HHS Seeks Public Input On Medicaid Waiver

North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) is seeking public comment on an amendment to the state's Medicaid Traditional Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities/Developmental Disabilities (IID/DD) Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver. Public comments will be accepted from January 26 through February 25, at 5 p.m.

The waiver offers a range of in-home and community-based services that support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the least restrictive setting.

The purpose of the amendment is to implement changes in services and programming to improve access to home and community-based services and update language changes related to internal processes.

One proposed change is adding a new service, Host Homes, which will assist families during times of crisis by providing a private home where their child can live in the interim, with reunification with the family as the primary goal.

The waiver amendment application with the proposed changes

is available at hhs.nd.gov/waivers. Copies can be mailed upon request.

Comments can be submitted by mail to North Dakota Health and Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Section, Attn: Heidi Zander, 1237 W. Divide Ave., Suite 1A, Bismarck, N.D., 58501, by email to hzander@nd.gov, or by phone at (701) 328-8945, 711 (TTY), at 5 p.m.

After the public comment period ends, the waiver will be submitted to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Based on the CMS timeframes for review and approval, the waiver amendment is expected to be effective on June 1.

Waivers are agreements between CMS and a state's Medicaid agency and serve specific groups of people. Waivers specify the number of people to be served, eligibility criteria, available services, including any limits on services, and procedures for the evaluation and re-evaluation of level of care.

View the draft waiver amendment document at www.hhs.nd.gov/waivers. A copy will be provided upon request.

AVE NW TO 91ST AVE NW

Engineer Hennessy discussed the amendment of contract for HDR Engineering for the three different design options for relocating power poles from 102nd Ave NW to 91st Ave NW, CR4 with Mountrail Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC).

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Hollekim, to approve the signing of the amendment to agreement for engineering services with HDR Engineering for the CR4 Improvement Project with an increase of \$57,080 with a grand total of \$1,036,778.29 with cost split 50% Mountrail Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) and the County. Upon roll call, DeGroot, Olson, Hollekim and Ruland voted yes. Motion carried.

2. CR3 PROJECT NO. 03(71)23

Moved by Comm. Olson, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve signing the Construction Agreement between Jensen Brothers Construction, Inc. and Mountrail County for the Palermo North CR3 Project No. 03(71)23. Upon roll call, DeGroot, Hollekim, Ruland, Olson and Rice voted yes. Motion carried.

3. 2026 TOWNSHIP ANNUAL ROAD MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

Moved by Comm. Olson, seconded by Comm. DeGroot, to approve signing the Notice to Proceed with Jensen Brothers Construction, Inc. for CR3 Project No. 03(71)23. Upon roll call, DeGroot, Hollekim, Ruland, Olson and Rice voted yes. Motion carried.

4. 2026 TOWNSHIP ANNUAL ROAD MAINTENANCE

Engineer Hennessy provided the 2026 Township Annual Road Maintenance Binders.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No one had any comments.

5. ADJOURN

The Board adjourned at 10:37 A.M. to meet in regular session on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 9:00 A.M. Accepted and approved this 20th day of January, 2026. Truly Ruland, Chairman

Mountrail County Commissioner

Stephanie A. Pappa, Auditor

Mountrail County Auditor

PROCEEDINGS OF THE

MOUNTRAIL COUNTY

COMMISSIONERS

1. OPENING & ROLL CALL

The Board met in special session on Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 8:00 A.M. via GoToMeeting and Emergency/Community Room, Mountrail County Courthouse, Stanley ND with Commissioners Joa Hollekim, John DeGroot, Truly Ruland, Jason Rice and Wayne Olson present via GoToMeeting. Wade Enget, State's Attorney was present. Also present was Tammy Leupp, Building Supervisor.

Chairman Ruland called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. BUSINESS

A. FOSTER CARE HOUSE

State's Attorney Enget discussed the commission fee of 6% to Reynolds Realty. Stephanie A. Pappa, Auditor discussed the offer of \$390,000 with the closing cost to be paid by the county.

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Hollekim, to reject the offer of \$390,000 with the closing costs of \$8,000 to be paid by the County for the County-owned land and house located at 2 Valley Dr. Stanley, ND as Lot 1, Block 3, Replat of Lot 1, Block 3, Country Meadows 2nd Subdivision, Stanley City, .42 acres. Upon roll call, Rice, Olson, Hollekim, DeGroot and Ruland voted yes. Motion carried.

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Hollekim, to approve the rebanding of the Correctional Nurse from a banding/grading of B31 to the following options: Registered Nurse be banded at a C43; LPN be banded at a B23 and an LPN IVTH be banded at a B31 as per the recommendation of the Human Resource Advisory Committee. Upon roll call, Ruland, Olson, Hollekim and DeGroot voted yes. Motion carried.

Moved by Comm. DeGroot, seconded by Comm. Hollekim, to approve the hiring of Reynolds Realty to sell the County-owned land and house located at 2 Valley Dr. Stanley, ND as Lot 1, Block 3, Replat of Lot 1, Block 3, Country Meadows 2nd Subdivision, Stanley City, .42 acres. Upon roll call, Rice, Olson, Hollekim, DeGroot and Ruland voted yes. Motion carried.

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