

North Dakota Workforce Development Council

2017 Legislative Policy Recommendations

The North Dakota Workforce Development Council was authorized in 1999 under Executive Order 95-01. The Governor designates the Council as the state's workforce investment board in accordance with Section 101(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). The role of the Council is to advise the Governor and public concerning the nature and extent of workforce development in the context of North Dakota's economic development needs and how to meet these needs effectively while maximizing the efficient use of available resources and avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort.

The Council's responsibilities to the Governor include:

- Identifying, developing and recommending workforce policy changes to federal and state programs that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the State's workforce development system.
- Reviewing and identifying the current and future economic development and workforce development needs of the state and recommending steps for meeting those needs.
- Providing direction for a comprehensive workforce development strategic plan.
- Identifying and developing recommended actions that will enhance and increase the capacity of the state's workforce development system.
- Identifying and developing opportunities for collaboration and partnership between education, employment and supporting workforce development activities in the State.
- Performing the duties and functions of State Board as prescribed under WIOA.

The following recommendations, presented by the Workforce Development Council, comprise a combination of strategies to support the North Dakota economy. The Council recognizes the alignment of the activities listed below, the North Dakota's Strategic Plan for Workforce Development and the Find the Good Life in North Dakota campaign. Qualified workers will need to be attracted to the State. The quality of life, present in North Dakota, is critical in workforce attraction, and a skilled and knowledgeable North Dakota workforce will grow our economy. Capitalizing on emerging and diverse industries will help the North Dakota economy, create wealth and jobs and encourage the development of new knowledge and technology. Subsequently, the Council supports the following recommendations which complement existing initiatives or programs and supports expansion of successful employment based strategies:

Increase diversification of the North Dakota economy

The Workforce Development Council strongly supports an emphasis on STEM initiatives that support targeted and emerging industries that diversify the North Dakota economy. Increasing economic diversity would allow the State's economy to continue to grow during all economic conditions.

Efforts to diversify North Dakota's economy may include strengthening the following industries:

- Supporting the Grand Sky UAS Park and unmanned aerial systems and technology to support the Governor's Cybersecurity Task Force
- Increasing North Dakota computational, data analytic resources
- Transforming natural gas into plastics or fertilizer

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- Utilizing waste heat from power plants for producing specialized crops and agricultural products, such as ethanol

STEM education for all students is a link to our State's future prosperity. STEM education prepares students with the basic building blocks for successful postsecondary and workforce pathways which support targeted industries and potential expansion through diversification. Students develop problem solving skills with creative solution theories that encourage higher level cognitive development required for future workforce needs.

Quality of Life and Affordable Living

Promoting quality of life factors, affordable housing, community aesthetics, child care, the arts, combined with in-demand employment opportunities in North Dakota, impact the attraction of workforce. Support for education and healthcare occupations is important to continue to attract families to relocate to North Dakota and to meet the overall workforce needs.

North Dakota has seen an unprecedented in-migration of workers to the state. Employers report that applicants who relocate to work in North Dakota inquire about available healthcare services and educational opportunities when considering employment in the State.

Recommendations to support workforce and training in occupations for high quality of life include:

- Improving higher education capacity for health care training
- Supporting flexibility and streamlining clinical rotation capabilities
- Aligning and networking K-12 and postsecondary STEM educational initiatives Ex. ND EPSCoR
- Supporting the Department of Public Instruction's efforts to address teacher shortages across North Dakota Ex. Masters in Teaching program
- Marketing of the State of North Dakota through Tourism and the Find the Good Life campaign's emphasis on attracting individuals and families

Expand the North Dakota Workforce

Developing the North Dakota workforce is essential to building a foundation for maintaining and growing the economy. Strategies include increasing and improving skills and the promotion of in-demand occupations to meet the needs of employers.

Expanding the workforce begins with developing the existing workforce potential. Diverse populations within North Dakota require skill development and resources required to meet higher level training needs to fill the existing and future workforce needs.

North Dakota's low unemployment rate indicates a continuing need to attract out-of-state workers to fulfill the workforce requirements dictated by the state's energy, agricultural and emerging industries. Reduced energy prices have caused a temporary slow-down of energy resource needs. However, as a turn-around develops, an increase in skilled workers will again become apparent and continue to grow.

The WDC supports the following strategies to expand the North Dakota workforce and support the diversification of the ND economy.

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- Internship and apprenticeship promotion and expansion into non-traditional areas such as healthcare and information technology.
- Retain and Expand Youth potential through –
 - Career awareness of employment opportunities in North Dakota
 - Support and expand Career and Technical Education
- Develop existing potential labor pools to fill the workforce needs in the State
 - English Language Learners,
 - Native Americans,
 - Individuals with Disabilities,
 - Youth and
 - older workers
- Develop Increase the number of out-of-state existing students enrolled in the North Dakota University System. Retention of out-of- state students increases the candidate pool necessary to meet the workforce needs in the state.
- Engage individuals who partially completed college to return and finalize their education
- Support STEM initiatives
- Support of targeted scholarships for targeted industries
- Support/Create initiatives that expand nontraditional gender roles in the workforce
- Invest in grant writing resources for a centralized coordinated effort to create proposals for the significant resources available through federal workforce-related competitive funding opportunities.