

WIOA ANNUAL REPORT

WORKFORCE INNOVATION &
OPPORTUNITY ACT

PY 2024

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Executive Summary

North Dakota continues to have one of the highest labor force participation rates in the nation. During the last program year, North Dakota consistently ranked in the top two states for highest labor force participation, reaching a high of 70.8% in July of 2024¹. The unemployment rate in North Dakota is typically one of the lowest in the nation. This trend continued during the last program year as the state was in the top six states for the lowest unemployment rate, reaching a low of 1.9% in September and October of 2024².

Beginning with the second half of the program year, North Dakota's labor market is experiencing a period of transition with a disruption in agricultural manufacturing and energy while also seeing growth in the healthcare and technology industries. These shifts, combined with inflation, demographic shifts, and persistent workforce shortages continue to create hiring challenges for employers with a greater need for skilled labor.

In his first month in office, Governor Armstrong highlighted these challenges in his State of the State Address to the North Dakota Legislature further underscoring the importance of aligning education, economic development, and labor systems to meet not only the needs of employers, but also jobseekers. He also emphasized the past investments in housing, day care, and workforce attraction and retention and the need for continued focus on short-term and long-term solutions to these challenges, specifically noting that students are the best workforce recruitment tools.

"The single best workforce recruitment tool North Dakota has is our University System."

-Governor Kelly Armstrong
2025 State of the State Address

Governor Armstrong also created a Workforce Subcabinet to address the ongoing workforce challenges to align over 80 workforce development programs to avoid duplication and create efficiencies. As this gets underway in the next program year, the subcabinet will work alongside the North Dakota Workforce Development Council (The Council), an advisory board with members appointed by the Governor. These members represent all regional areas of the state, as well as industry, education, and state workforce partners. The role of The Council is to advise the Governor on the workforce development efforts within the state by creating strategies and recommendations to address workforce challenges. Each biennium, prior to the start of the Legislative Session, The Council provides a set of recommendations to the Governor. In 2025, those recommendations targeted the following areas related to workforce:

- Enhancing career exploration and bridging technical skill gaps.
- Removing employment barriers including improving occupational licensure reform; and
- Strengthening worker recruitment and retention in North Dakota

Enhancing Career Exploration and Bridging Technical Skill Gaps

The state continues to focus efforts on partnering with schools, universities, and employers to bring awareness to the need for earlier career exposure. The Career Builders Scholarship and the Technical Skills Training Grant described in prior reports continue to be fundamental programs to incentivize engagement for in-demand positions.

1. **Career and Technology Centers** – Through funds appropriated during the 68th Legislative Assembly, work continues building and expanding access to Career and Technical Education Centers and Facilities for workforce development and training.

¹ NDLMI - Labor Force and Unemployment Statistics Dashboard

² NDLMI - Labor Force and Unemployment Statistics Dashboard

- Currently, 81 school districts are supported by Area Career and Technology Centers.
2. *Student Work Experiences* – As indicated in prior program years, the state continues to expand the number of internships, work experiences, and apprenticeships with over 25K students taking advantage of these learning opportunities
 3. *Technical Skills Training Grant* – Using \$2M from the funds previously allocated, The Council recommended amending the grant to support student learner on-the-job training opportunities aligned to the in-demand job list.

Removing Employment Barriers

1. *Breaking Barriers Webinar* – With 1 in 3 Americans having a criminal history resulting in lifelong barriers to finding and keep employment, Job Service North Dakota hosted a webinar in October of 2024, bringing together state partners and external subject matter experts to educate employers about the programs, resources, and pathways to reentry through job skills and training opportunities.
2. *Justice Impacted Workforce Services* – Job Service North Dakota continues to provide outreach to North Dakota correctional facilities by providing Career Readiness workshops and classes to individuals who are within 90 days of release. These career readiness courses include resume building, job searches, interviewing skills, and other courses to prepare individuals for the workplace upon release.
3. *Job Placement Partnership Program* – Utilizing funds from the 68th Legislative Assembly, Job Service successfully implemented a pilot program to help justice-impacted individuals remove barriers to entering the workforce. The success of the program includes 500 referrals from the Department of Corrections with only 11.65% being reincarcerated. Participants also earn an average of \$20,000 more/year than those who never enrolled. Due to this success of the program, the 69th Legislative Assembly continued the funding for this important program.
4. *New American Employment Program* – Job Service North Dakota continues to contract with the Office of Refugee Resettlement to provide case management and intensive employment services to refugees resettling in the area. This collaborative effort connects refugees to English as a Second Language classes and other educational programs, and they are assisted with navigating training and workforce opportunities and help them integrate within their communities. Through March of 2025, 71% of participants were employed.
5. *Tribal Outreach* – With five federally recognized Native American tribes in North Dakota, Job Service provides tribal outreach to introduce high school and college students, as well as adults, to workforce training opportunities and technical education. These focused efforts also engage individuals to identify and remove barriers to employment and provide career readiness classes to prepare them for the workforce.
6. *Recovery Services* – With a renewed focus on addressing recovery within the state, work continues with individuals in recovery. Job Service North Dakota provides assistance through resume building, job search, and mock interview services for individuals in transitional homes who want to become self-sufficient.

Strengthening Worker Recruitment and Retention in North Dakota

The highlights provided below are in addition to the continued efforts of the Department of Public Instruction and the University System who work with employers and the public education system to offer internships, apprenticeships, and grants to retain students in North Dakota.

1. *Statewide Virtual Job Fair* – Now in its 4th year, Job Service North Dakota hosted a Virtual Job Fair in January of 2025 to help employers connect with job seekers looking for career opportunities in North Dakota. This year, the job fair attracted job seekers from

- 24 other states and 17 countries.
2. *H2A Program* – Job Service North Dakota facilitates the H2A program with our federal partners. This program has had exponential growth over the past few years and is vital to the agricultural industry. The 69th Legislative Assembly appropriated additional funding to hire individuals to address the program growth and complexity.
 3. *Find the Good Life* – The Department of Commerce continues to operate its Find the Good Life Program to attract workers and support relocation to North Dakota using funds allocated during the 68th Legislative Assembly. The program has generated over 4,000 leads.

North Dakota remains committed to driving and advancing the initiatives outlined herein through a proactive and collaborative approach with a focus on innovation, interagency coordination, and adaptability to build a skilled and resilient workforce that supports North Dakota's growth and opportunities for residents.

Waivers

Allowing the State to Expend up to 50% Youth Funds for In-School-Youth (ISY)

PY24 began with implementing the approved youth waivers. Procedures were updated to reflect available Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for ISY along with up to 25% more funds available for ISY training. As schools and ISY became aware of the opportunities these waivers provided, WIOA case advisors began enrolling ISY into postsecondary training.

One of the effects of this approach was a decrease in adult funds for ISY. The adult program retained approximately \$80,000 since adult funding was not needed for ISY. This was a welcome result as the adult program is the largest target population in North Dakota, and this funding stream experiences a funding hold almost every year as available funds run low before the next year's funds become available.

Allowing WIOA ITA's for ISY

WIOA advisors commented on greater flexibility provided through this approach. They see an increased seamless process for ISY allowing more time to develop trusting relationships, assess needs, and implement employment plans for those going on to postsecondary education. This approach provides greater flexibility and agility to serve North Dakota youth regardless of school status. Another commenter states these waivers are a "game-changer" for ISY in rural areas, allowing for more opportunities and access to training programs.

Working with out-of-school youth (OOSY) often feels rushed when their goals are to begin postsecondary training programs as soon as possible. Youth have a start date in mind for a training program before they begin the process of eligibility, enrollment or assessment. WIOA case advisors find it is more difficult to work through the process with OOSY that may need some additional time, in addition to helping the youth to maintain their enthusiasm for the training program.

Preliminary statistics show a total of 15 ISY enrolled in postsecondary using ITAs.

- 5 exited the program, 12 remain enrolled
- 4 of 5 completed the training program = 80%
- 4 of 4 who completed the training program earned a credential = 100%

- 5 of 5 who exited the program earned at least one MSG = 100%

This demonstrates an increase for ISY compared to PY24/23 in overall Y measures

PY24

Cred Attainment	59.4%	61.1%	102.9%
MSG	63.1%	69.9%	110.8%

PY23

Cred Attainment	55.0%	51.2%	93.0%
MSG	59.2%	69.6%	117.6%

Costs

- Approximately \$60,000 paid for ISY ITA costs
- Approximately \$20,000 paid in support services through ISY funds

In demand postsecondary training programs entered:

- Healthcare - Nursing/CNA/Dental hygiene
- Education - Teaching
- Technology - Computer system analyst
- Personal Services - Barber/hairdresser
- Transportation - CDL

Early assumptions:

- Both waivers allow for more seamless services for ISY
- Results show improved measures of credentials and MSGs captured
- ISY who go directly to postsecondary training programs may be more likely to complete their training programs with a continuation of services

Evaluations

Workforce Ecosystem Assessment

In June of 2025, North Dakota Commerce released a Workforce Ecosystem Assessment conducted by Deloitte Consulting. The comprehensive assessment goal is to gain a snapshot of the current-state landscape and to understand how current ecosystem programs and services operate. The assessment spanned approximately 20 weeks and provided ecosystem partners and customers with multiple opportunities to participate and share feedback on strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement. Workforce programs and services were categorized to visualize relationships and how individuals and employers move through the ecosystem.

Final report is published on the Commerce site:

[https://www.commerce.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/Workforce%20Development/ND%20Workfor ce%20Ecosystem%20Final%20Report.pdf](https://www.commerce.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/Workforce%20Development/ND%20Workfor%20ce%20Ecosystem%20Final%20Report.pdf)

Eligible Training Provider Study

Our program data is deep-rooted in our everyday life at Job Service North Dakota. It is used in the organization in a variety of areas that include helping make decisions regarding policy and brainstorming new workforce approaches.

During PY24, Job Service North Dakota completed a data analysis of the North Dakota Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). This analysis was done to determine program effectiveness in areas such as program length, in state versus out of state performance, and performance measures.

The main area of study that was focused on, however, was effectiveness in 2-year programs versus 4-year programs. The questions that were addressed in this analysis were:

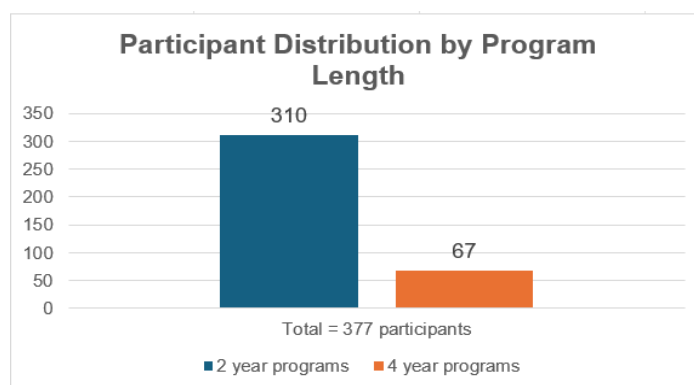
- What were the credential attainment rates in 2-year versus 4-year programs?
- What were the employment rates after exit in 2-year versus 4-year programs?
- What were the median earnings in 2-year programs versus 4-year programs?
- Should 4-year programs continue to be funded?

Data Sources, Collection Methods, & Sampling

The data used for this study came from the adult, dislocated worker, and youth PIRL datasets dated June 30, 2024. The data was organized by Eligible Training Providers and Training Programs, along with other key data elements identified as relevant to the analysis. Once organized, a comparison was conducted between two-year and four-year programs.

Demographics

There are 377 individuals that make up the WIOA participants in the 2-year and 4-year programs. 310 participants were enrolled in a 2-year program and 67 were enrolled in a 4-year program



WIOA Program Type of Participants

Adult	240
Dislocated Worker	10
Youth	127

Sex of Participants

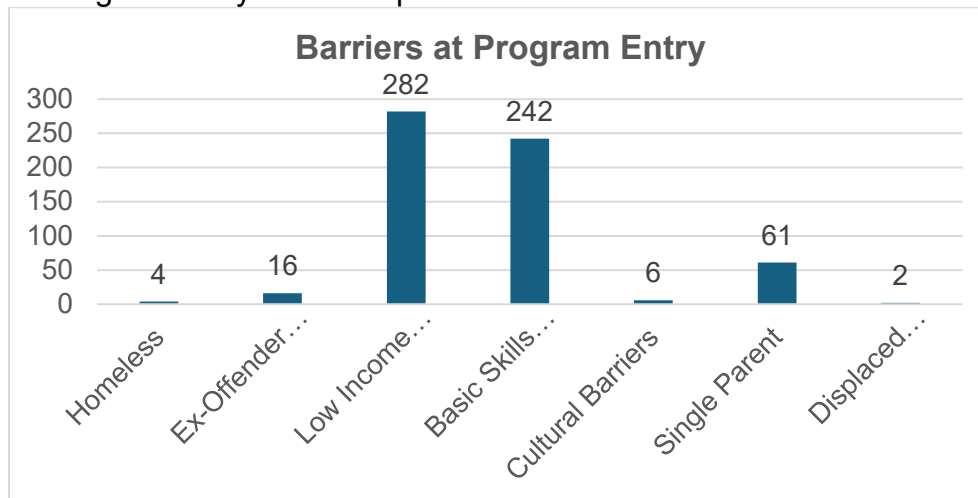
Female	226
Male	149
Did not Self-Identify	2

Race of Participants

	American Indian / Alaska Native	Asian	Black / African American	Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	White
Yes	32	12	103	3	228
No	329	349	258	358	133
Did not Self- Identify	16	16	16	16	16

*Participants could identify as one or more race

Barriers at Program Entry for Participants



The barriers at program entry of participants included Homeless (4), Ex-Offender (16), Low Income (282), Basic Skills Deficient (242), Cultural Barriers (6), Single Parent (61) and Displaced Homemaker (2). Note that participants could identify one or more barriers

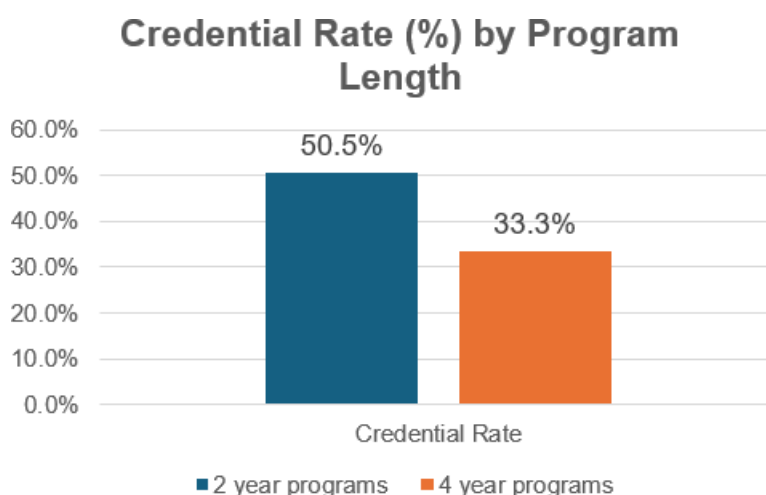
Key Findings

2-year training programs

- Out of 310 WIOA participants, 184 exited; of that, 97 completed the program of study
- Out of the 97 that completed training, 49 earned a credential (50.5%)
- 124 participants were employed in the second quarter after exit
- 112 participants were employed in the fourth quarter after exit
- The median earnings in the second quarter after exit were \$5,286.32

4-year training programs

- Out of 67 WIOA participants, 28 exited; of that, 18 completed the program of study
- Out of the 18 that completed training, 6 earned a credential (33.3%)
- 14 participants were employed in the second quarter after exit
- 13 participants were employed in the fourth quarter after exit
- The median earnings in the second quarter after exit were \$4,098.90



Determination

Following the completion of the ETPL data analysis, the results were shared with key stakeholders for review. After further discussion and supplementary analysis, stakeholders concluded that four-year programs should be removed from the ETPL list starting in PY24 due to low completion rates, limited credential attainment, and insufficient post-exit earnings among participants.

Future Evaluation Plans

In response to the findings of the workforce ecosystem assessment, Governor Armstrong has established a Workforce Subcabinet and three specialized task force committees to address key priorities. We will continue to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of this assessment.

As the removal of four-year programs from the ETPL is a relatively recent policy change, Job Service North Dakota will review performance outcomes in the upcoming Program Year to assess the overall impact of this change. We will also continue to review other aspects of the ETPL list to determine potential future program changes.

Customer Satisfaction

Employers/Job Fairs

Job Service North Dakota, with workforce partners including Economic Development Corporations and/or Chambers of Commerce, Department of Corrections, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other stakeholders hosted 47 job fairs during the year in various locations throughout North Dakota. Large job fairs were held in Fargo, Grand Forks, Bismarck, Minot, Dickinson, and Williston. These events were multi-industry job fairs that attracted 1,457 employers and 6,922 job-seekers. Additionally, a Nationwide Virtual Job Fair was hosted that attracted individuals from 23 different states and 20 countries. The event was attended by 653 individuals.

Three of the nine workforce centers across the state introduced a new event in PY24 titled Talent Tuesdays or Workforce Wednesdays. This event is held once per month and brings employers and job seekers together in the workforce centers with physical space to host 25-30 employers. These smaller multi-industry hiring events are a hit in the communities with employers and job seekers providing favorable comments due to the regular schedule and

location of the events in the workforce centers rather than in larger venues, such as a hotel or events center.

Another popular event held in Grand Forks, Fargo, and Bismarck in the workforce centers during the first Thursday of every June is the “Fair Chance Job Fairs.” These events normally have 25-30 employers and average 75-90 job seekers. They allow a chance for such populations as the justice involved, Vocational Rehabilitation participants, Adult Education participants, and new Americans to enter the workforce and remove any barriers these populations may encounter. This past year, a total of 570 job seekers attended these three events.

The nine workforce centers also held local hiring events at their locations throughout the year. Hiring events are a great tool to showcase an individual employer and what they have available for job opportunities. These employers are allowed to use the conference rooms, smaller meeting rooms, and can talk to job seekers who are using the computer banks in the resource rooms. During the year, a total of 41 employers took advantage of this unique opportunity while attracting 431 job seekers.

During the job fairs, surveys are handed to the employers at the last hour of the event. The survey consists of nine questions ranging from “were you satisfied with the number of visitors at your booth, approximately how many jobs seekers visited the booth, how many employees the employer would consider hiring, job offers made, job fair times, promotion of the event”, etc. There was a total of 280 surveys returned this past year.

All surveys are compiled and read after the event. If the situation warrants, the suggestions are acted upon. Most of the responses were favorable and included notes like:

- Venue, variety of attendees and food was great, very organized event!
- Job Fairs seem to be less popular than in the past, so it is hard to get high attendance, but this was so well advertised. Good work!
- I enjoyed visiting and interviewing applicants and visiting with other companies as well.
- You guys are doing a great job. I will keep coming each year.
- Thank you so much for the opportunity.
- The facility was excellent. I enjoyed meeting the various people attending.
- It was nice that the booth space was assigned.
- I was here a couple of years ago and the turnout was not as great, very impressed with the turnout this year!
- Thank you for all your work on this year’s job fair!
- Great venue! Lots of attendees. Job Service staff were super helpful!

However, on occasion, the employers make suggestions to improve the events. Items asked for include a more comfortable atmosphere (too hot/cold), too long of a job fair, too short of a job fair, hold the event into the evening, hold the event on a Saturday afternoon, job seekers were not qualified, provide different types of food/drink, etc.

Customers/Participants

Each of the nine workforce centers has a customer survey/suggestion box. Each survey consists of five short questions about their workforce center experience. The same survey is used in all nine workforce centers. Once the customer has completed the survey, he/she can either turn it in at the front desk or put it in the “Suggestion/Survey” box. Each customer is highly encouraged to fill out a survey when he/she has worked with a staff member on a one-on-one

basis or group orientation/training event. All surveys are compiled each week and given to the manager for action. Surveys are then compiled monthly, and results are sent to the Workforce Services Director. The Workforce Services Director consults with the corresponding workforce center manager about any proposed changes in service delivery that may or may not be changed from the suggestions that were received from job seekers. If a change is implemented in one Workforce Center, the other eight managers are brought into the conversation to see if this is good idea in their respective centers.

The survey poses five questions about the customer experience while visiting the Workforce Center. The survey allows for comments and of those individuals that did comment, almost all of them were complimentary of staff and the services they received. Without identifying the participant, the comments were shared with staff to show areas they did well in and areas they may need improvement, as perceived by their customers. All questions rank the service the customers received in a numerical format of 1-5 (1 lowest, 5 highest). During the past PY, the nine workforce centers received only 267 surveys from the customers/participants who were utilizing our services. Average service was excellent.

The five questions that are asked are as follows:

- Staff were friendly and helpful
- My employment-related needs were met
- My unemployment claim needs were met
- I learned something useful today
- What did we do great?

Here are a few comments:

- I received great feedback.
- Staff were helpful and knowledgeable.
- They are very friendly, helpful, nice, and kind people.
- Staff are friendly and helpful, 100%.
- They are very knowledgeable, it was so nice that I was not so stressed, they helped me understand!
- The reception I got from the staff was outstanding, their knowledge about the questions asked was topknot, overall outstanding.
- Everyone was extremely helpful and kind. All employees were quick to assist even when busy.
- They let me know exactly what to do, great customer service.
- Employees are kind & professional & never quit on you.

State Strategies

In December of 2024, the North Dakota Workforce Development Council (WDC) released the 2025 recommendations to address workforce challenges and position North Dakota for economic growth in the 2025-2027 biennium. These goals, based on the strategic vision for North Dakota's workforce development system to create a 21st Century workforce and promote a comprehensive strategy for coordinating and enhancing state and federal resources to serve the state's workforce, were the guidepost for workforce legislation in the 69th legislative session in January 2025. These proposals focus on expanding career exploration, closing skill gaps, reducing employment barriers, reforming licensure processes, and attracting and retaining workers to meet the state's evolving needs.

"North Dakota's economic future depends on our ability to address workforce challenges with innovative, forward-thinking solutions," said Gov. Doug Burgum. "These recommendations

demonstrate the Workforce Development Council's commitment to ensuring every North Dakotan has the opportunity to thrive while supporting our businesses in meeting their needs." Among the key recommendations are:

- **Expanding the Technical Skills Training Grant** to support student on-the-job training aligned with in-demand jobs.
- **Launching a comprehensive apprenticeship package** that includes scholarships, pre-apprenticeship programs, and marketing efforts to promote these pathways.
- **Piloting relocation and support programs for legal immigrants**, with funding for transportation, housing, and job placement.
- **Developing grants for digital skills and AI adoption** to enhance productivity for small businesses and nonprofits.
- **Creating a clearinghouse for occupational licensing concerns** to improve processes for professionals and employers.

In addition to the WDC recommendations above, the Workforce Development Council engaged in a 20-week ecosystem assessment conducted by Deloitte Consultants to understand the current programs and services. The assessment was conducted in collaboration with the Workforce Development Council (WDC) and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Core Partners, Job Service ND, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Education, to gather insights from a wide range of stakeholders.

Themes gathered to focus efforts for building a stronger, more responsive workforce for ND include:

- **Need for Unified Leadership**
- **Access Barriers Despite Strong Partnerships**
- **Increased Need for Wraparound Services**
- **Rural-Urban Disparities**
- **Labor Market Misalignment**
- **Funding and Staffing Gaps**
- **Data and Knowledge Sharing Challenges**

The assessment outlined four key areas for future focus:

- **Strategic Vision:** Defining clear goals and roles for ecosystem steering.
- **Customer Focus:** Streamlining access and engaging with customer needs.
- **Awareness and Engagement:** Enhancing outreach to communities and partners.
- **Information Tracking and Sharing:** Improving data collection and sharing for program efficiency.

Following the 69th Legislative session and Ecosystem Assessment, the newly inaugurated Governor, Kelly Armstrong, launched the Workforce Subcabinet and the inaugural Governor's Workforce Summit, a first of its kind event. More than 100 workforce leaders from across North Dakota gathered at the Bismarck State College Advanced Technology Center.

The summit marked a pivotal moment in the state's commitment to strengthening its workforce ecosystem. With more than 80 workforce development programs currently in place, the event served as a launchpad for deeper collaboration, strategic alignment and innovation in workforce readiness.

Gov. Armstrong opened the summit with a fireside chat outlining his vision for a unified, responsive workforce system. He emphasized the importance of aligning state efforts to meet the needs of both employers and job seekers in a rapidly evolving labor market. "North Dakota's future depends on our ability to adapt, collaborate and lead," Armstrong said.

“This summit is about more than programs, it’s about people. We’re building a skilled workforce that fuels North Dakota’s economy and ensures every North Dakotan can thrive.”

A panel discussion, “Actioning Our Shared Vision,” moderated by Commerce Deputy Commissioner and Workforce Director Katie Ralston Howe. Subcabinet leaders shared how their agencies are aligning efforts to implement strategic workforce priorities and strengthen cross-sector collaboration.

Attendees participated in round table discussions focused on in-demand occupations, future-ready skills and innovative approaches to workforce engagement. The summit also highlighted success stories from across the state and encouraged leaders to share ideas and forge new partnerships.

The Subcabinet leaders will continue work on three primary goals:

- **Simplified Entry:** The team is developing a centralized landing page, potentially with a chatbot, to streamline access to workforce resources for job seekers, current workers, and businesses. They are reviewing models from other states and plan to meet biweekly to refine the concept, with features like childcare incentives under consideration.
- **Data Integration:** This group held its kickoff meeting to share foundational resources and will soon define milestones and timelines for integrating workforce data across agencies. Members TBA.
- **Warm Handoffs:** The team, including agency representatives, is exploring ways to improve service transitions for clients, drawing inspiration from the early 2000s "On Common Ground" program. They will meet every other week to deepen collaboration and address challenges.

This work will inform the One Stop partners input in the upcoming DOL State Plan modifications.

Job Service staff continue participation in many activities that support economic, sector strategies and talent pipeline development around the state. Established sector strategy groups discuss industry challenges and find solutions through the Manufacturing Roundtable discussions. Two examples of these are the Dickinson Manufacturing Roundtable located in the southwest part of the state and the Highway Two West Manufacturing Association located in the northeast part of the state. In addition, the Unmanned Aerial System industry has grown at an immense pace and has added a Roundtable quarterly discussion that Job Service staff attend. Job Service staff offer the services available to assist with labor exchange, training opportunities and labor market information at all statewide strategy meetings. Job Service Workforce Center staff also continue to participate in sector strategies with Tech Connect IT Sector and the Health Tech Trade Steering Committee.

Through the EmPower North Dakota Commission, leaders from all major energy industries in North Dakota lead with one common goal: to be critical thinkers for the development of the state’s energy resources. The strategic partnerships between North Dakota’s long-standing and emerging energy industries enable all sectors of the industry to work together as they meet our states and country’s energy needs. North Dakota is proactive and aggressive in addressing energy development and serves as a model for America in fostering innovative, long-term energy strategies to meet our nation’s growing energy demand and need for energy security in an environmentally responsible manner.

A sector strategy in North Dakota that is somewhat nontraditional in the definition of a “sector strategy” is the collaboration of state workforce agencies in meeting the needs of New

Americans who are arriving in our state. Through working with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in North Dakota, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), Global Neighbors and Global Friends Coalition, we are placing the New American populations in work sectors such as manufacturing, hospitality, and healthcare. This collaboration with JSND, Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation continue to serve this population.

Finally, the Greater North Dakota Chamber provides a license for The Manufacturing Institute's Dream It, Do It, a sector strategy to connect with high school students to provide exposure to manufacturing jobs and dispel misconceptions about the industry. Manufacturers identify young professionals within their company who engage students to inspire them to consider a career in manufacturing. This model has been shared with the Workforce Development Council and other industries with hopes of replicating the success and providing career awareness experience for the next generation of workers.

Work-based learning continues as a focus in the state with the workforce system partners. In PY24, 20% of WIOA Youth participants were involved in a work experience activity. A smaller number were in on-the-job training, yet Job Service anticipates increasing this work-based learning activity in the next year. Workforce system partners collaborate to inform businesses statewide of the benefits work-based learning opportunities provide. These opportunities offer youth an avenue to explore and experience future careers and are a talent strategy to impact youth and connect them to their communities.

Based on the Workforce Development Council's 2025 key recommendation to launch a comprehensive apprenticeship package that includes scholarships, pre-apprenticeship programs, and marketing efforts to promote these pathways, House Bill (HB) 1036 was introduced in the 69th Legislative Session. This bill was introduced to create an Apprenticeship Division within the ND Department of Labor and Human Rights to assist, coordinate, collaborate, and implement a statewide strategy to assist the State Director of the DOL Office of Apprenticeship in ND. The Apprenticeship Division was to maintain and manage existing apprenticeship programs and develop and expand newly created apprenticeship programs in the state. Due to some confusion with positioning this division in the ND Department of Labor and Human Rights, this bill was defeated. The workforce partners are optimistic these efforts will be revived in the next Legislative Session held in 2027.

Despite the setback for state legislative support, registered apprenticeship programs continue to grow in the state. The Department of Public Instruction was awarded an apprenticeship grant and within 2 years filled all spots for teacher apprentices. They anticipate expanding education registered apprenticeship to include principals and lead teachers.

House Bill 1199, Workforce Innovation and Apprenticeship Incentive Program was passed during the Legislative Session. This bill created a pilot grant program to be administered by the Department of Commerce to encourage employers to establish or expand apprenticeship models in high-demand fields.

Key Provisions of the bill include:

- Employers may apply for state matching funds (up to 50% of training costs, capped per apprentice).
- Grants may be used for:
 - Curriculum and mentor development
 - Related technical instruction (RTI) costs
 - Certification or equipment needs
- Priority for:

- Small and mid-sized employers
- Rural areas
- Sectors facing chronic labor shortages, such as health care, energy, manufacturing, construction, and IT.
- Aligns with the Workforce Development Council strategic plan to reduce barriers for employers establishing apprenticeships.

During PY24, the ND State Director of the DOL Office of Apprenticeship retired from service. Coordination with the newly appointed point of contact for the state will require some effort to establish open lines of communication, yet the future for apprenticeship expansion in ND appears to be positive.

Performance Accountability

PY24 WIOA Performance Outcomes and Effectiveness in Serving Employers Rates

		Negotiated Performance	Actual Performance
Adult	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	80.0%	82.2%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	74.8%	79.9%
	Median Earnings in the 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$10,000	\$9,843
	Credential Attainment Rate	71.0%	67.0%
	Measurable Skill Gains	62.6%	78.4%
Dislocated Worker	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	84.1%	80.0%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	84.8%	100.0%
	Median Earnings in the 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$14,000	\$17,100
	Credential Attainment Rate	83.6%	100.0%
	Measurable Skill Gains	80.5%	75.0%
Youth	Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 2nd Quarter After Exit	82.3%	90.8%
	Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 4th Quarter After Exit	81.0%	83.6%
	Median Earnings in the 2 nd Quarter after exit	\$7,600	\$8,996
	Credential Attainment Rate	59.4%	61.1%
	Measurable Skill Gains	63.1%	69.9%

Wagner-Peyser

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	66.0%	68.3%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	65.0%	67.3%
Median Earnings in the 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,500	\$9,030

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Combined Result Across All WIOA Core Programs		
Indicator	Numerator/Denominator	Rate
Retention with Same Employer in the 2 nd and 4 th Quarters After Exit Rate	1,490 / 3,021	49.3%
Combined Result Across WIOA Title I Programs		
Retention with Same Employer in the 2 nd and 4 th Quarters After Exit Rate	223 / 332	67.2%

ND exceeded the 90% requirement of negotiated performance in all areas. Strategies to improve credential attainment and measurable skill gains are in place as reminders for staff to follow up with participants regularly while they are enrolled and for one year after exit to provide support and capture credentials. The state office conducts data matches to confirm credentials. The Dislocated Worker program had low participant numbers for PY24, generally ND sees few long-term employer layoffs and most individuals affected find similar employment quickly returning to work. ND met/exceeded negotiated performance though it is much more difficult with so few participants.

The state's common exit policy affects these programs: Title I – Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker, Title III – Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance and Jobs for Veterans State Grant programs. The common exit is applied when participants are in two or more programs at the same time or have an overlap in their periods of participation.

The last qualifying, participant-level service, or the last staff-assisted or individualized service date that the individual participated in and can be in any one of the six programs becomes the auto-exit date. The auto-exit date is calculated and applied by the MIS system and not a calculation applied by staff.

Negotiated performance rates for PY24 and PY25 are included in the WIOA Performance Outcomes chart included in this section.

Data validation is conducted at least annually to determine compliance with provisions of the Act as stated in the policy. ND uses the MIS to gather a random sample and to conduct data validation. State administration leads the process and involves workforce center lead staff for cross examination of alternative office records. This process has contributed to reductions in error rates.

Statewide Governor's Reserve Funds

Statewide funding is essential for operation of the federal programs JSND offers and for continued workforce development in our state. This funding is utilized for the North Dakota Workforce Development Council, One-Stop certification and monitoring, maintenance and development costs related to our Virtual One-Stop management information system, and continued work on our Eligible Training Provider List.

Statewide funds were used to continue to fund the ETPL and Document Imaging modules from

our vendor Geographic Solutions. This has enhanced the efficiency and accuracy of the ETPL and ties it into our case management and labor exchange system allowing direct reporting into the PIRL.

Statewide funds were once again used to promote a virtual job fair highlighting high wage/high demand careers in ND. The promotion centered around recruitment for out-of-state jobseekers based on data we identified from our Virtual One-Stop System. We had job seekers from 24 states, and 17 different countries attended this virtual event. The total jobseeker count was over 511 individuals with 84 employers participating. Additionally, statewide funds were used to contract with Easy Virtual Fair that provides a virtual platform to conduct job fairs.

JSND renewed their software contract with virtual reality headsets and they continue to be a favorite of DOCR facilities, area schools, and colleges to promote 91 high wage/high demand occupations across North Dakota.

Lastly, statewide funds were used to renew the contract for the Big Interview and Foreign Language modules that are compatible with our Geographic Solutions Virtual One-Stop system. These modules continue to see growth from year-to-year.

Through the activities supported by these funds, North Dakota's One-Stop Delivery System provides high-quality, outcome-focused workforce development services consistent with our state's four-year plan, while tracking progress toward meeting strategic goals and implementing the Governor's vision for North Dakota's workforce system.

Rapid Response

Job Service North Dakota (JSND) received notices of layoff or closure events from 20 companies in the state of North Dakota in program year 2024 (PY24). As a result of these notices, JSND provided Rapid Response services to more than 409 workers. Three of the events affected remote workers only, who resided in North Dakota at the time of layoff. JSND received Federal WARN notices for four events out of the 20 total.

JSND provides flexible Rapid Response services to both companies and affected workers that aim to meet the needs of each individual situation. Rapid Response services are carried out in four phases: Fact-Finding and Assessment, Planning, Delivery of Services, and Reporting and Follow-up.

1. Fact-Finding and Assessment: Workforce Center staff gather preliminary information related to the layoff or closure and conduct an assessment.
2. Planning: The Planning phase consists of establishing a date, or multiple dates, for the Rapid Response session, arranging presenters for the session, and gathering materials and information to provide to recipients.
3. Delivery of Services: The Rapid Response services provided by JSND are in the following delivery formats:
 - In-person, formal Rapid Response presentations, either at the company's location or on-site in one of our nine Workforce Centers.
 - Physical packets of layoff-pertinent information for workers provided to employer (these are included in the above presentations).
 - Digital resources, including electronic versions of our packet components, and links to online resources.
 - "Reverse Job Fairs", where employers come to meet with employees seeking work due to a layoff or closure of a particular company.

- One-on-one services provided to affected employees in situations where the employer declined Rapid Response services or where JSND was not notified of the layoff or closure until after it occurred.

In addition, Workforce Center staff also assist affected workers by:

- Assisting with job search and placement assistance
 - Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs
 - Providing labor market information
 - Connecting individuals to information on availability of support services and referral to appropriate services
 - (This includes information on medical insurance options, credit counseling, and other financial resources.)
 - Assisting with establishing eligibility for financial aid assistance for training and education
 - Providing basic information regarding services under WIOA
 - (When individuals are interested in receiving any of the WIOA partner services, referral to all core programs takes place and any co-enrollment occurs with the various WIOA partner programs.)
 - Clearly explaining information regarding filing claims for UI, including general eligibility requirements, explanation of benefits, and website and telephone number to file for benefits
4. Reporting and Follow-up: Any forms or other reportable information is given to the State's Dislocated Worker Office (DWO), and case notes are completed in the employer's record. JSND stays available as a resource for the employer for any future needs and proactively works with the affected workers throughout their layoff and beyond.

Wagner Peyser Activities

Activities provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service section 7(a) and 7(b) include activities such as providing job search and placement to Unemployment Insurance claimants, administering the work test and making eligibility assessments (e.g. Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment).

The Reemployment Services Program serves unemployment insurance claimants by providing individualized services such as education, training, referrals, and reemployment activities that lead to successful employment outcomes. This program is Job Service North Dakota's (JSND) in-house "RESEA" program without the required intensive federal reporting. It allows JSND to provide one-on-one reemployment services via in-person, telephonic, and electronic means to individuals who are receiving unemployment benefits and not returning to their employer. The notable results of this program over the last year eight years include a 10.6-week unemployment average duration per claimant.

Through the Wagner-Peyser Act, JSND also serves employers via our Virtual One-Stop website, www.jobsnd.com, telephonically, virtually, and in-person. Annually, JSND sponsors approximately twenty job fairs across the state to serve area employers. Additionally, in January of every year JSND hosts a Virtual Job fair that has, on average, attracted over 100 state employers and 650 jobseekers. JSND hosts monthly hiring events in our AJCs that attract 15-25 employers and an average of 40 jobseekers per event. Labor Market Information is provided to employers and Chambers/Economic Development Corporations who inquire about prevailing wages, job openings, census data, employee benefits, supply/demand, etc.

In the summer of 2023, Job Service started a series of webinars based around employment and Labor Market Information. The first webinar was titled Work Based Learning as a Talent Pipeline, the second webinar was titled Exploring International Student Pathways to Maximize Your Talent Strategy, and the third was titled The Labor Market Information Playbook. This past year, we hosted our fourth webinar, Hiring Justice Involved Individuals. We partnered with our associates at DOOCR for a very successful webinar. JSND has a Veteran employment webinar planned for November of 2025.

Job Service staff participate in regional career expos. Career expos are designed to educate attendees about career opportunities and related training and education that will open doors to a chosen field. Employers exhibiting at a career expo are not there to immediately hire employees but rather to educate and inspire their future workforce. These events connect JSND, Career & Technical Education, employers, economic development professionals, teachers, students and parents to meet the regional employment demands. In addition to hands-on exhibits, the career expos feature break-out seminar sessions for students. Sessions feature topics in numerous career clusters.

JSND assists in workforce recruitment efforts by offering space in the One-Stop Workforce Centers for businesses to hold individual, on-site job fairs. Job seekers accessing One-Stop services on-site are invited to meet with business representatives. Social media outreach invites all job seekers statewide to these events. A wide array of businesses, ranging from retail, energy, transportation, manufacturing, and healthcare took advantage of this service.

Reemployment activities are provided in the nine AJCs for individuals looking for work. These activities include resume development, help with interviewing skills, and job search assistance, and are conducted through our website, one-on-one service, and group sessions. Basic support for unemployment insurance claimants is also provided including filing claims, weekly certification, and the ID.Me process.

JSND uses this grant to support area high school career fairs such as the Northern Valley Career Expo, Southwest Manufacturing Day, and South Central Career Day. These events attract rural and metropolitan schools and students to learn about available careers in ND and what colleges support training to enter these careers.

State Best Practices and Needs

The challenges the workforce system is currently facing include:

- Flat or reduced levels of WIOA funding present ongoing challenges for small, single-area states in meeting workforce development goals, maintaining program effectiveness and service delivery.
- Participants in training, with barriers, often become overwhelmed by actions out of their control and may end up dropping out of training. This result is participants not completing training programs. WIOA case managers provide supportive services and work with other state agencies to assist with support for the participants' needs, but at times it just isn't enough to help them get over the hurdles. Talks with other states show similar experiences with offering support but there are not many examples of how to resolve the problem. North Dakota has been reviewing our training completion rate based on the Quality Report Analysis provided by DOL. We have seen a decrease in the number of participants who have not completed training over the last few years. In the past year, we have had an increase in the adult program training completion rate from 73% to 75%. The Youth program increased from 73% to 81%. We are optimistic that the

improvement will continue in this positive direction.

A lesson learned based on the challenge noted above includes the following:

- Concerned with the number of participants dropping out of training, North Dakota conducted an in-depth study of eligible training provider programs. Results showed only 33% of participants in 4-year programs completed and earned a credential, 50% of participants in 2-year programs completed and earned a credential, and 84% of participants in programs less than 2 years in length, completed and earned a credential. North Dakota presented the results of the evaluation to the ND Workforce Development Council and updated the ITA policy and procedures to remove 4-year programs as an option for WIOA training.

Each year, North Dakota evaluates the effectiveness of program activities and costs based upon a participant's positive results for the WIOA performance measures. Cost per participant and cost per positive outcome is computed for the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

The PY24 overall cost per participant served for all programs was \$3,871. The PY24 overall cost per positive outcome for participants from all programs was \$6,910. Increased training costs are a result of the in-demand occupations in the state. An individual may have more than one positive outcome. Each positive outcome enhances the individual's ability to achieve and sustain long-term employment. The statewide data for expenditures, cost per participant, and positive outcome is displayed in the following table:

Program	Program Expenditures ¹	Total Participants Served	Cost per Participant	Total Positive Outcomes ²	Cost per Positive Outcome
Adult	\$2,566,152	764	\$3,359	480	\$5,346
Dislocated Worker	\$215,456	10	\$21,546	13	\$16,574
Youth	\$1,875,397	429	\$4,372	181	\$10,361
TOTAL	\$4,657,005	1,203	\$3,871	674	\$6,910

¹Includes Career and Training Services

²Only Includes Employment Rate Q2 and Q4

A primary focus of WIOA in ND is to assist individuals in classroom or occupational skills training. The tables below illustrate the comparison of training services by program over a three-year period, and a summary of the targeted, in-demand training programs participants have attended.

INDIVIDUALS ENROLLED IN WIOA TRAINING

	PY22	PY23	PY24
Adult	317	299	278
Dislocated Worker	7	8	4
Youth	119	132	157
Total	443	439	439

**PY24 ACTIVE WIOA TRAINING ENROLLMENT NUMBERS WITHIN
TARGETED INDUSTRIES AND HIGH-WAGE/HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS**

	Adult		Dislocated Worker		Youth		Total Training	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Energy	22	7.91%	0	0.00%	34	21.66%	56	12.76%
Manufacturing	21	7.55%	0	0.00%	30	19.11%	51	11.62%
Technology	12	4.32%	0	0.00%	10	6.37%	22	5.01%
Healthcare	92	33.09%	0	0.00%	35	22.29%	127	28.93%
Transport	80	28.78%	1	25%	14	8.92%	95	21.64%
Support Occupations ¹	7	2.52%	2	50%	3	1.91%	12	2.73%
Other ²	44	15.83%	1	25%	31	19.75%	76	17.31%
Total	278	100%	4	100%	157	100%	439	100%

¹ Includes occupations supporting all targeted industries including financial, administrative, human resources, and marketing.

² Includes occupations such as social service workers, legal, law enforcement, plumbers, and carpenters.

Success Stories

Martin*, Adult

Martin, a veteran of the U. S. Air Force, had been a self-employed independent contractor for concrete and construction. Due to the climate in North Dakota, concrete work is seasonal. He was experiencing issues in supporting his growing family. At the time of application, Martin had a family of five with another child on the way and was on public assistance. He was referred to JSND for possible CDL training assistance through Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program in late October 2024. He had some experience but had not received and completed the training through an approved training provider now required by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) before taking the CDL Class A test.

Martin was determined WIOA Adult eligible in December of 2024 and approved for training on the following January. He completed his training in April of 2025, successfully passing his CDL Class driving exam. Martin obtained employment as a CDL driver earning \$28.00/hr, in a city in Western North Dakota. This position comes with health benefits and is year-round work. During his training, WIOA assisted him with tuition, per diem and transportation assistance as well as rental assistance for the family home.

Kyle, Out-of-School Youth

At 22 years old, Kyle was working 50-60 hours per week as a cook and caterer at a popular Grand Forks restaurant. He had big dreams to create a better future for himself despite not finishing high school and wanted a career path that would allow him to achieve these dreams while allowing for growth and financial independence.

Kyle found an opportunity to pursue his Commercial Driver's License (CDL), with funding

provided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. He persevered through CDL training while continuing to work long hours at the restaurant, and he was able to earn his CDL license.

Now, with new career opportunities ahead, Kyle is not only working toward a more stable financial future but also thinking bigger. With the support of WIOA and his own drive to succeed, Kyle has transformed his future and is now steering his life in an entirely new direction.

Peter*, Adult

From a participant in their own words:

“For as long as I can remember, I had wanted to become a pilot, but this always seemed like an incredibly lofty and prohibitively expensive goal. However, I knew this was a dream I couldn’t give up on and decided to pursue it after graduating high school. North Dakota has become a hot bed for aviation, and I knew UND was the place for me to go to achieve my goals. I was feeling this intense financial pressure and by a stroke of luck, I was introduced to Job Service and WIOA at the Northern Valley Career Expo in 2022. I was given information and put in contact with an advisor, one of the kindest and most dedicated people I’ve had the pleasure of working with.

Through the help and support Job Service provided me, I went on to graduate with a degree in Commercial Aviation from UND in the summer of 2024. Since then, I have begun working for UND as a flight instructor to help give back and spread my passion for aviation with the new generation of pilots coming to UND every year. I wouldn’t have been anywhere near as successful if it wasn’t for the tremendous help and generosity of Job Service. I can’t thank them enough!”

During the career expo in October 2024, Peter came up to the WIOA lead from Grand Forks at the Job Service North Dakota WIOA booth, like he had done before he enrolled in the program, and he brought a friend/referral with him to come learn more about WIOA. Peter asked me to say Hi to his WIOA case manager and again extended his gratitude for Job Service and WIOA. What a way to pay it forward! Outreach does work!

Gerald*, Adult

Gerald came into the Grand Forks Job Service office requesting assistance in obtaining his CDL at a driving academy in Grand Forks in December 2024. He had recently quit his job as it wasn’t the best environment. He wanted to get his CDL to better support his family and because he loved driving so he thought it would be a good fit.

Gerald was approved for funding and started the class on December 30th, 2024. During the monitoring visit, Gerald’s instructor said he was learning a lot and was excited to get his CDL. After a few weeks of training, Gerald stopped in the office and was very excited as he had received his CDL. He talked with his case manager about potential employers and completed searches and application preparations. In an update to his case manager, Gerald related that he was employed with a transportation company in rural North Dakota.

Carson*, Youth

Carson was a 20-year-old justice-impacted youth when he came into JSND in January 2025 while he was on temporary unemployment. He inquired about the CDL training and if he could possibly qualify for the WIOA program. We discussed the process, and Blake returned the next

day and was eager to complete the application as classes were scheduled to begin in early February.

Carson did qualify for WIOA and began his training at a nearby school. His case manager had a chance to visit with him before classes began, and he was so grateful for the chance to attain his CDL. Blake completed and passed his training in March of 2025 and was at Job Service the next day after passing his test to share his credentials he had earned! Carson stated this training was such a positive experience and would be using his CDL when he returns to the construction company he worked for prior to his layoff.

In an update, Carson related that he was indeed back with his construction company in Grand Forks and is currently utilizing his training as a CDL driver. Carson is a great example of someone who utilized their down time to enhance their skills and can now make an even better wage.

Molly*, Out-of-School Youth

Molly stopped at Job Service in July of 2024 to inquire about possible assistance to help her achieve her aspiration to complete a welding certification training. Molly did qualify for WIOA and began her training in September of 2024.

She had a medical emergency during her training which slowed the completion of the program, but Molly was determined to finish! Once she had clearance from her doctor, she was able to return to complete training.

Molly completed her 640-hour combination welding course and earned 3 welding certifications in February of 2025. She returned to her hometown and is currently working as welder with an employer in the community. Molly planned to work there temporarily while awaiting completion of the onboarding process and securing housing in a new community to begin her career with a major corporation in the welding industry.

During a follow-up conversation, Molly expressed gratitude for several things including how much she enjoyed the training and was proud of the fact the many of her classmates were very supportive of her training in a non-traditional occupation for a woman. She also thanked Job Service for help she has received with her training and shared that without assistance she would not have been able to achieve her goal!

Richard*, Out-of-School Youth

Richard, a 24-year-old who had dropped out of high school and had recently quit his job, came to the Job Service Workforce Center in Grand Forks to inquire about the WIOA program and the possibility of getting help to attain his Commercial Driver's License (CDL). He was looking for a career change and had spoken to a friend about the CDL training.

Richard realized he liked working by himself and thought that a career in driving would make the most sense for him. Richard did qualify as an Out-of-School Youth and began classes in August of 2024 with a driving academy in Grand Forks.

When doing the progress monitoring, it was apparent to the case manager that Richard had selected the right training to suit his needs. His trainer shared that he was quick to catch on and would be completing the program soon. The trainer stated he was sure that Richard would be successful. When the case manager spoke to Richard, he shared how much he was enjoying

the training and was anxious to complete the next step of testing.

In October of 2024, Richard sent proof of his Class A Driver license to his case manager and began a job in Grand Forks with a local towing company. He is looking forward to using the CDL license to attain his career goals.

Richard shared the following: "I would like to thank Job Service ND for helping me attend a CDL training course, I would not have been able to get my CDL if it wasn't for their help. Having a CDL got me a raise in pay and allows for so many more opportunities, now I can go anywhere and easily be able to find a job."

Kjersten*, Out-of-School Youth

Kjersten came to Job Service asking for possible assistance with obtaining her Cosmetologist license in October of 2023. Cosmetology had just appeared on the In-Demand Occupations list in July of that year, and a local school was on the ETPL list. After completing the application process, she began her classes in November of 2023.

Despite several health and housing issues which would require short breaks in her studies, Kjersten completed her classroom training in December of 2024. Her state licensing happened in February of 2025. Within a week of passing her state boards Kjersten was able to begin a job at a local salon. She shared that her long-term aspiration is to rent a booth in a nearby location and would like to specialize as a nail technician.

Kjersten on several occasions has expressed gratitude to JSND for the opportunity to complete her dream of becoming a Cosmetologist.

Kory*, Out-of-School Youth

Kory, a young Veteran of the U. S. Air Force, reached out to Job Service regarding welding training. Working with a case manager in the WIOA program, KM was determined eligible for WIOA Out of School Youth in August of 2024. He was provided with labor market information concerning welding jobs in North Dakota and was approved for 640 hours of welding training. His case manager wrote him a letter of recommendation for the American Welding Society (AWS) grant which he received to assist with training expenses. The training start dates are on 16-week rotations, and the next available training start date was in January 2025.

Kory started his training in January of 2025, and successfully completed it in April, obtaining 9 welding certifications. During the training period, he attended a resume workshop specifically set up for his school's welding students at a Job Service office. The training provider has employers come in to meet students while they are in training, and Kory had an active job search while he completed his training and certification process.

WIOA assisted Kory with tuition, books, fees, tools required for training, housing and per diem while away from home. Kory was offered and accepted a position with a company in May of 2025, making \$28.00/hr. with benefits.

Antonio*, Out-of-School Youth

Antonio, a recently separated Veteran of the U. S. Air Force had started a position with a local company as a track laborer and decided that was not for him after a couple of months. He reached out to a local electrical co-op to become an electrician's apprentice. He was placed with a local electrical business which had an On-the-Job Training proposal set up with the local Job

Service office.

Antonio was referred to the WIOA Youth Employment Advisor as a possible candidate for the OJT in July of 2025. He worked with the local office Employment Advisor to apply for the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program and was determined eligible for the program. Antonio received labor market information and assessment services as part of his initial enrollment and participation and was approved for the OJT shortly thereafter.

Antonio began his OJT a few weeks later, for 1040 hours at \$23.36 an hour. During the 6-month training, he received favorable evaluations from the employer and supervisor. It was mentioned that he was doing so well, there was a possibility of him overseeing his own two-man crew on an upcoming contract.

Antonio completed his OJT in January of 2025. His wage will continue to increase based on the company's pay scale and his continued growth in knowledge and skills. During this time, his application for the apprenticeship program was submitted to the Department of Labor and his registered apprenticeship will run until 2029.

**Names marked with an asterisk have been changed to respect participants' privacy. Real names have been used where participant permission was given.*

Employment Trends in Today's Economy

In the past 20 years, North Dakota's economy has gone through three distinct stages: flat growth (2000-2006), rapid growth (2006-2015), and sustained growth (2015-present).

Following years of stagnation, the state experienced dramatic workforce fluctuations in the mid-2000s due to the Great Recession in the United States (2007-2009) and the oil boom in western North Dakota (2006-2015). Despite some downturn during the recession, the concurrent effect of the oil boom quickly drove North Dakota's economic growth to surpass its pre-recession levels in the 2010s. During the oil boom, North Dakota experienced sudden population growth, an employment surge, and an increase in average wages.

Many industries in North Dakota were affected by both the upswing of the oil boom (2006-2014) and its downturn when oil prices dropped (2015-2016). At the end of the boom, many economic figures initially declined, but employment and wage numbers for most industries remained high and steadily growing.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered the creation of public health policies, mandates, and guidelines, which affected the economy at every level – globally, nationally, and locally. The impact was reflected in metrics such as higher unemployment numbers, lower total employment across all industries, and a decrease in the labor force in North Dakota. By 2022, though, the number of unemployed people in North Dakota was at a twenty-year low, and statewide employment surpassed pre-pandemic levels. The current numbers indicate the state is continuing to grow slowly, as it had been before the pandemic.

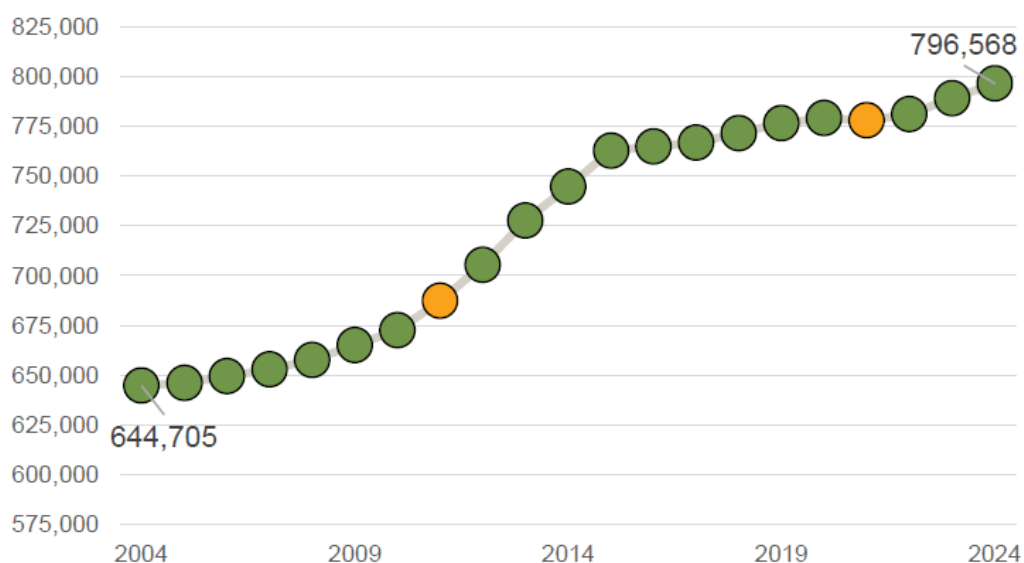
Population

Looking at North Dakota's population over the past 20 years, the growth curve exhibits two distinct stages: a period of steady, rapid growth, and a recent period of sustained slow growth. Through the 1990s and early 2000s, population growth was comparatively flat. The greatest growth period occurred between 2006 and 2015, when the oil boom happened in North Dakota. Sustained population numbers in recent years suggest that North Dakota's economy has also generated growth in non-oil industries.

Population in Recent Years

Between 2004 and 2024, the biggest year for population growth occurred in 2013, during the oil boom. The population in 2013 increased by 22,308 or 3.2 percent, over the previous year. During the oil boom, from 2006 to 2015, North Dakota's population grew annually at a rate between 0.5 and 3.2 percent. By comparison, the average annual growth rate before the oil boom, between 2004 and 2005, was 0.1 percent.

In the years after the oil boom, annual growth rates have been lower but mostly positive, ranging from -0.1 to 1 percent. In the last year, North Dakota's population increased by 7,521, or 1 percent, from the previous year.

Figure 1: North Dakota population 2004-2024

Census years are indicated by gold markers on the graph. The US Census produces actual population figures; for all other years, the US Census Bureau produces July 1 estimates.

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2004-2024

Table 1: North Dakota population from 2019-2024

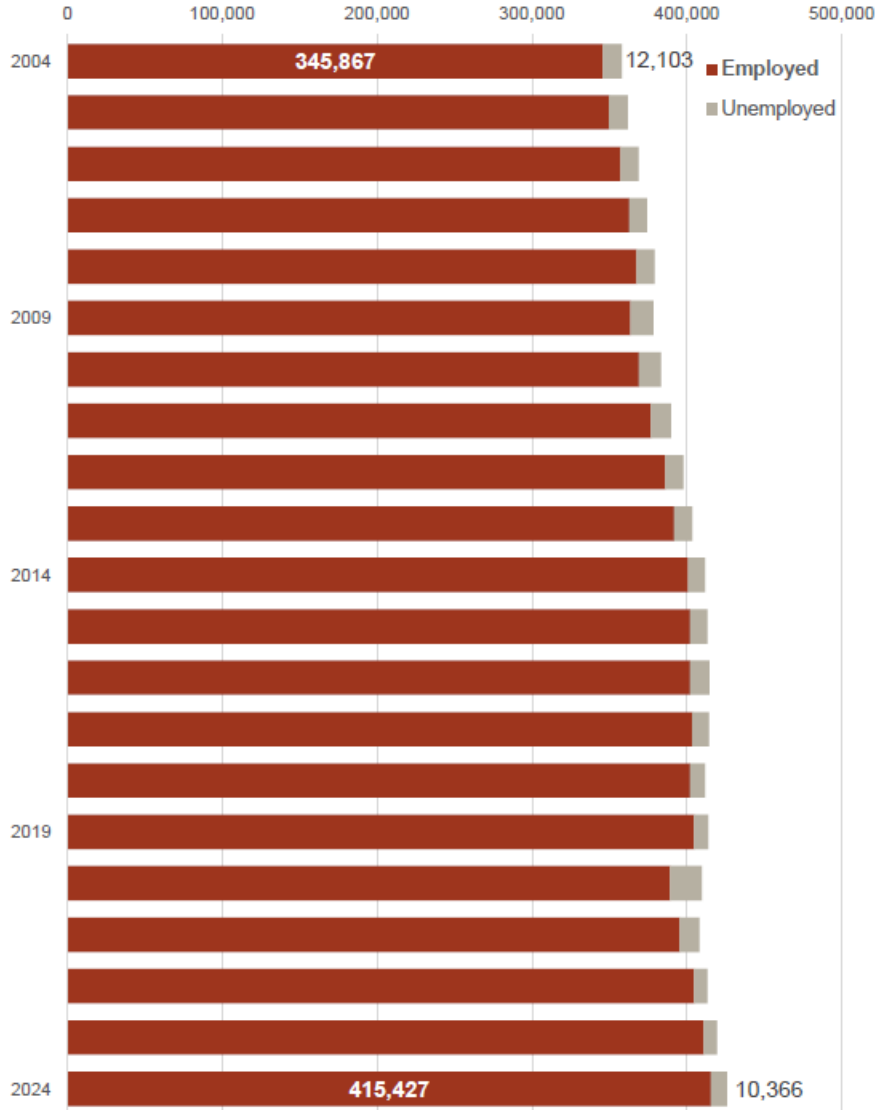
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
POPULATION	776,548	779,094	777,966	781,057	789,047	796,568
# CHANGE	-	2,546	(1,128)	3,091	7,990	7,521
% CHANGE	-	0.3	(0.1)	0.4	1.0	1.0

Source: United States Census Bureau, 2004-2024

Labor Force

From 2004 to 2024, the labor force grew from a total of 357,970 to 425,793 (a net increase of 67,823, or 19 percent). Over the same period, North Dakota's population grew from 644,705 to 796,568 (a net increase of 151,863, or 24 percent). North Dakota's labor force has generally followed the same pattern as its population, steadily increasing during the oil boom and remaining rather flat in the years since. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 caused a sudden increase in the unemployed portion of the labor force, which has since decreased.

North Dakota's labor force grew by 6,539, or 2 percent, from the previous year. The change primarily came from movement in the employed portion of the labor force, which grew by 4,666, or 1 percent. For comparison, the unemployed portion of the labor force grew by 1,873, or 22 percent, from the previous year.

Figure 2: North Dakota labor force number of employed and unemployed from 2004-2024

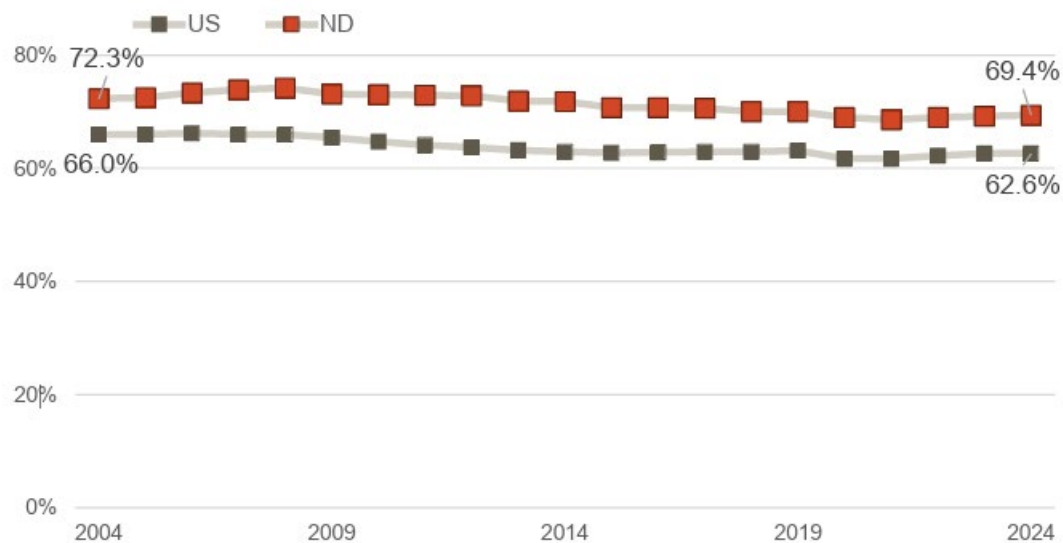
Source: Labor Market Information Center, Job Service North Dakota, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Unit

Labor Force Participation

North Dakota had a labor force participation rate of 69.4 in 2024. By comparison, the national rate was 62.6 percent. Historically, North Dakota has had one of the highest labor force participation rates in the nation. The rate has remained relatively flat for the past 20 years, reaching a peak of 74.2 in 2008 and a low of 68.6 in 2021.

Compared to all states in 2024, North Dakota ranked first in the nation with an adjusted labor force participation rate of 69.4 percent. West Virginia ranked last among all states, with an adjusted rate of 54.8 percent.

Figure 3: Labor force participation as a percentage of the civilian non-institutional population



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Table 2: U.S. Rankings by Labor Force Participation 2024

RANK	STATE	LFP %						
1	North Dakota	69.4	18	Alaska	64.6	35	Arizona	61.5
2	Nebraska	68.9	19	Rhode Island	64.4	36	New York	60.9
3	Utah	68.8	20	New Jersey	64.3	37	North Carolina	60.3
4	South Dakota	68.6	21	Idaho	64.0	38	Maine	60.1
5	Minnesota	68.1	22	Indiana	63.5	39	Hawaii	59.9
6	Colorado	68.0	22	Washington	63.5	40	Delaware	59.6
7	Kansas	67.1	22	Wyoming	63.5	40	Tennessee	59.6
8	Iowa	67.0	25	Missouri	63.3	42	Florida	58.5
9	Massachusetts	66.3	26	Montana	63.1	43	Louisiana	58.3
10	Virginia	65.9	27	Nevada	62.8	44	Arkansas	58.2
10	Wisconsin	65.9	27	Oklahoma	62.8	45	Kentucky	58.1
12	New Hampshire	65.6	29	Oregon	62.7	46	South Carolina	58.0
13	Maryland	65.4	30	Ohio	62.3	47	New Mexico	57.6
14	Vermont	65.3	31	California	62.1	48	Alabama	57.5
15	Illinois	65.0	31	Pennsylvania	62.1	49	Mississippi	55.3
16	Texas	64.9	33	Michigan	61.8	50	West Virginia	54.8
17	Connecticut	64.8	34	Georgia	61.6			

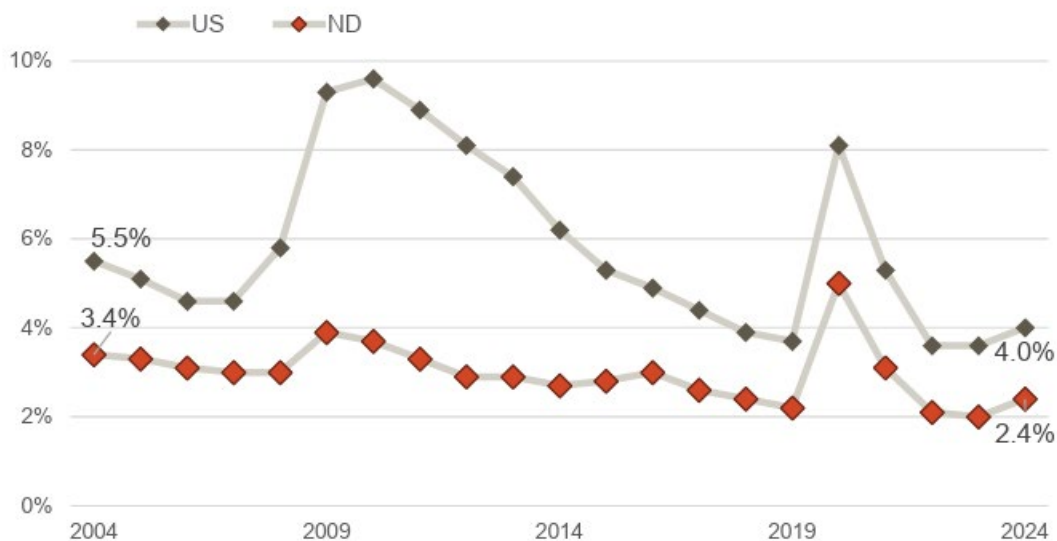
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS Unit

Unemployment Rate

North Dakota had an unemployment rate of 2.4 in 2024. By comparison, the national unemployment rate was 4 percent. Historically, North Dakota has had a very low unemployment rate. In the past 20 years, its lowest was 2.0 percent in 2023 and its highest was 5.0 percent in 2020. As with the state's labor force participation rate, North Dakota's unemployment rate has regularly outperformed the national average. The unemployment rates in all states increased in 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic but have since decreased.

Compared to all states in 2024, North Dakota ranked third in the nation with an unemployment rate of 2.4 percent. South Dakota ranked first among all states, with a rate of 1.8 percent. Nevada ranked last among all states, with a rate of 5.6 percent.

Figure 4: State and national unemployment rate 2004-2024



Source: Labor Market Information Center, Job Service North Dakota, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Unit

Table 3: U.S. rankings by unemployment rate 2024

RANK	STATE	UR %						
1	South Dakota	1.8	15	Wyoming	3.2	32	West Virginia	4.1
2	Vermont	2.3	19	Oklahoma	3.3	36	Indiana	4.2
3	North Dakota	2.4	20	Florida	3.4	36	Oregon	4.2
4	New Hampshire	2.6	20	Tennessee	3.4	38	Colorado	4.3
5	Nebraska	2.8	22	Arkansas	3.5	38	New York	4.3
6	Virginia	2.9	22	Georgia	3.5	38	Ohio	4.3
7	Hawaii	3.0	24	Arizona	3.6	38	Rhode Island	4.3
7	Iowa	3.0	24	Kansas	3.6	42	Louisiana	4.4
7	Maryland	3.0	24	North Carolina	3.6	43	New Jersey	4.5
7	Minnesota	3.0	24	Pennsylvania	3.6	43	Washington	4.5
7	Montana	3.0	28	Delaware	3.7	45	Alaska	4.6
7	Wisconsin	3.0	28	Idaho	3.7	46	Michigan	4.7
13	Alabama	3.1	28	Missouri	3.7	47	Illinois	5.0
13	Maine	3.1	31	Massachusetts	4.0	48	Kentucky	5.1
15	Connecticut	3.2	32	New Mexico	4.1	49	California	5.3
15	Mississippi	3.2	32	South Carolina	4.1	50	Nevada	5.6
15	Utah	3.2	32	Texas	4.1			

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), (LAUS) Unit

Industry Projections

Employment projections rankings do not necessarily reflect the fastest-growing industries, but they provide an idea of how industries are expected to grow or decline in the next 10 years (2023-2033). The Health Care and Social Assistance industry ranks highest in projected growth, with an expected increase of 8,956 positions, or a 14 percent increase. Most industries are projected to increase in the same period. The average projected increase in the 10-year period is 2,002 by number and 9 by percent. Other industries with significant projected growth are the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction industry (the highest percent growth expected: 3,417, or 19 percent) and the Construction industry (the second highest numerical growth expected: 3,763, or 13 percent).

Table 4: North Dakota Projected Industry Change by number or percentage from 2019-2024

RANK	INDUSTRY*	2024	2019	# CHANGE	% CHANGE
1	Health Care and Social Assistance	69,776	67,918	1,858	3
2	Retail Trade	45,943	45,861	82	0
3	Educational Services	36,909	34,701	2,208	6
4	Accommodation and Food Services	34,099	34,868	-769	-2
5	Construction	30,160	28,974	1,186	4
6	Manufacturing	28,459	26,692	1,767	7
7	Wholesale Trade	24,520	24,255	265	1
8	Public Administration	23,996	22,720	1,276	6
9	Transportation and Warehousing	19,297	19,843	-546	-3
10	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	18,215	21,387	-3,172	-15
11	Professional and Technical Services	17,809	17,029	780	5
12	Finance and Insurance	17,058	18,098	-1,040	-6
13	Administrative and Waste Services	13,453	13,723	-270	-2
14	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	12,458	10,957	1,501	14
15	Other Services (except Public Administration)	11,823	11,670	153	1
16	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5,784	5,876	-92	-2
17	Information	5,557	6,332	-775	-12
18	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4,941	4,593	348	8
19	Management of Companies and Enterprises	4,795	3,578	1,217	34
20	Utilities	3,642	3,750	-108	-3

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Occupational Projections

Employment projections rankings do not necessarily reflect the fastest-growing occupations, but they provide an idea of how occupations are expected to grow or decline in the next 10 years (2023-2033). Occupations in the Construction and Extraction occupations group rank highest in projected numerical growth, with an expected increase of 4,967 positions, or 14 percent. Most occupation groups are projected to increase in the same period. The average projected increase in the 10-year period was 1,701 by number and 8 by percent. Other occupation groups with significant projected growth are the Transportation and Material Moving occupations group (the second highest numerical growth expected: 4,142, or 9 percent) and the Healthcare Support occupations group (the highest percentage growth expected: 3,129, or 16 percent).

Table 5: North Dakota Projected Occupational Change by number or percentage from 2019-2024

RANK	OCCUPATION GROUP**	2024	2019	# CHANGE	% CHANGE
1	Office and Administrative Support	46,660	52,750	-6,090	-12
2	Transportation and Material Moving	40,980	42,340	-1,360	-3
3	Food Preparation and Serving Related	35,930	36,130	-200	-1
4	Construction and Extraction	34,840	36,880	-2,040	-6
5	Sales and Related	34,530	39,020	-4,490	-12
6	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	29,700	26,880	2,820	10
7	Management	26,170	19,700	6,470	33
8	Production	24,210	22,800	1,410	6
9	Educational Instruction and Library	24,190	23,730	460	2
10	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	22,660	22,020	640	3
11	Business and Financial Operations	20,690	17,590	3,100	18
12	Healthcare Support	17,620	17,790	-170	-1
13	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	13,440	14,460	-1,020	-7
14	Personal Care and Service	12,490	12,500	-10	0
15	Protective Service	8,010	6,880	1,130	16
16	Computer and Mathematical	7,640	6,450	1,190	18
17	Architecture and Engineering	5,970	6,490	-520	-8
18	Community and Social Service	5,730	5,380	350	7
19	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	5,150	4,990	160	3
20	Life, Physical, and Social Science	4,440	4,120	320	8
21	Legal	2,120	2,310	-190	-8
22	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	890	610	280	46

 Represents largest change from 2019 to 2024 by number or percentage

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

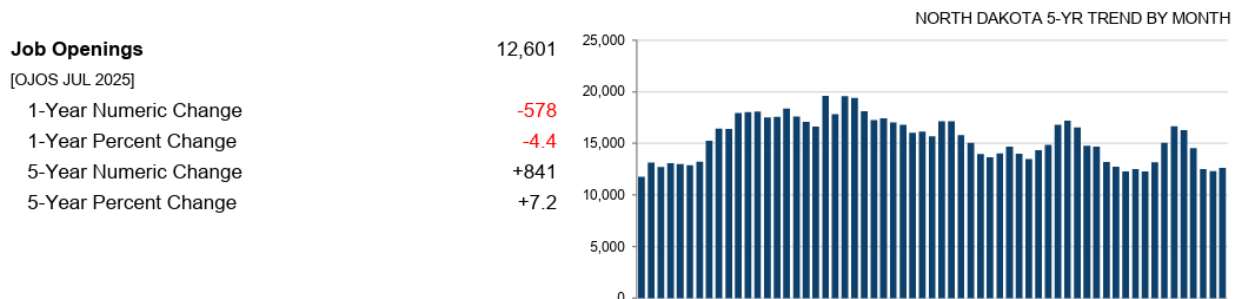
Education can also play a role in predicting where employment trends are heading. Occupations that require a postsecondary nondegree award or an associate degree are expected to grow by 10.5 percent. Occupations that require a bachelor's degree are expected to grow by 9.33 percent, and occupations that require a master's, doctoral or professional degree are expected to grow by 11.8 percent. Occupations requiring short-term on-the-job training (<30 days) are projected to grow by 5.57 percent, and long-term on-the-job training (>12 months) by 10.57 percent.

North Dakota Job Openings Data

Online job openings statistics provide a timely overview of the current supply/demand dynamic of North Dakota's labor market. Job Service North Dakota's online labor exchange system is the underlying source for the job openings and resume data produced. Comparing July 2025 (online job openings total 12,601) to previous years (Figure 5), openings have decreased since the prior year by -578. Of the 22 non-military major occupational groups, Healthcare Practitioners

and Technical reported the largest number of openings with 3,513, followed by Sales and Related with 907 and Transportation and Material Moving with 871. Among North Dakota's 53 counties, 27 reported an over-the-year increase in job openings, while 23 reported an over-the-year decrease, and the remaining were unchanged.

Figure 5: North Dakota total job openings five-year trend

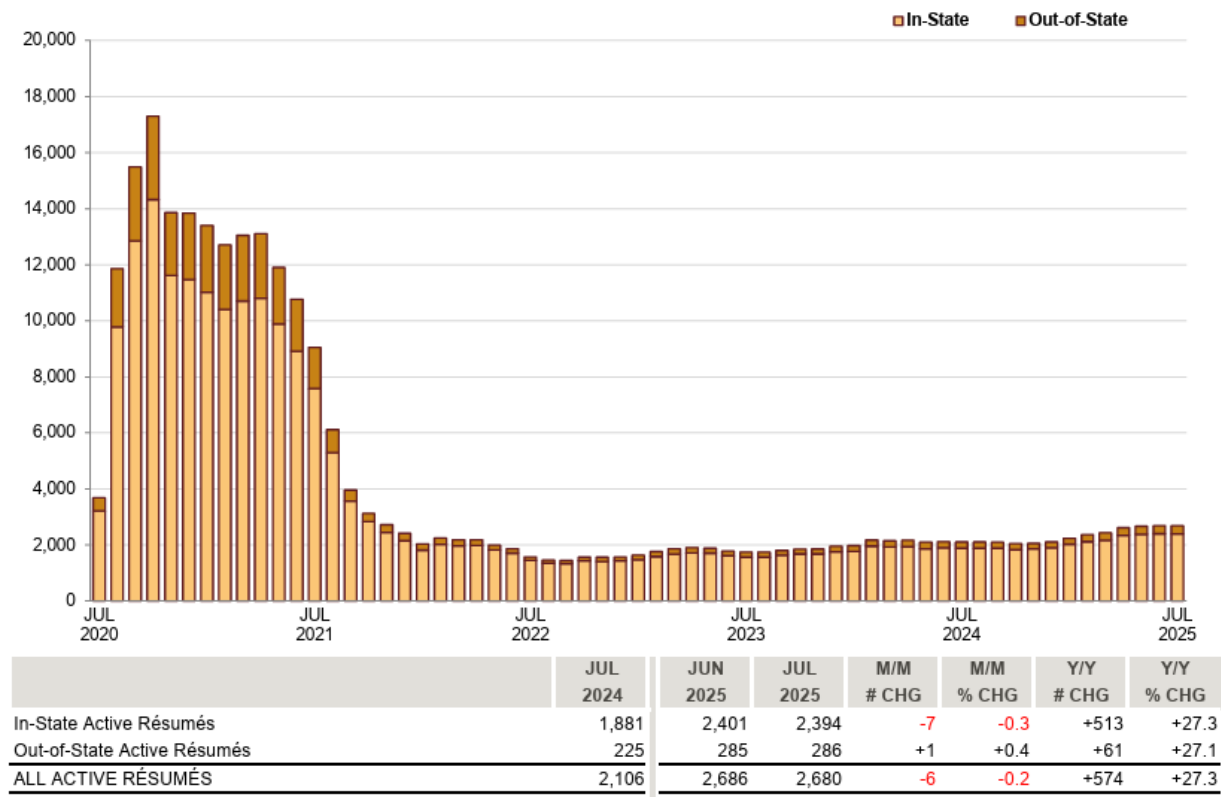


Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Active resumes totaled 2,680 in July 2025, a change of +574 from the same month one year ago. Of the 22-non-military major occupational groups, Office and Administrative Support reported the largest number of active resumes with 401, followed by Management with 337, and Production with 291. There were a total of 2,394 in-state active resumes and 286 out-of-state active resumes (Figure 5). In-state active resumes accounted for 89.3 percent of all active resumes while the remaining were out of state.

Among North Dakota's 53 counties, 34 reported an over-the-year increase in active resumes, while 13 reported an over-the-year decrease. Cass County reported the largest over-the-year increase in active resumes with a change of +296.

Figure 6: North Dakota’s total active resumes five-year trend



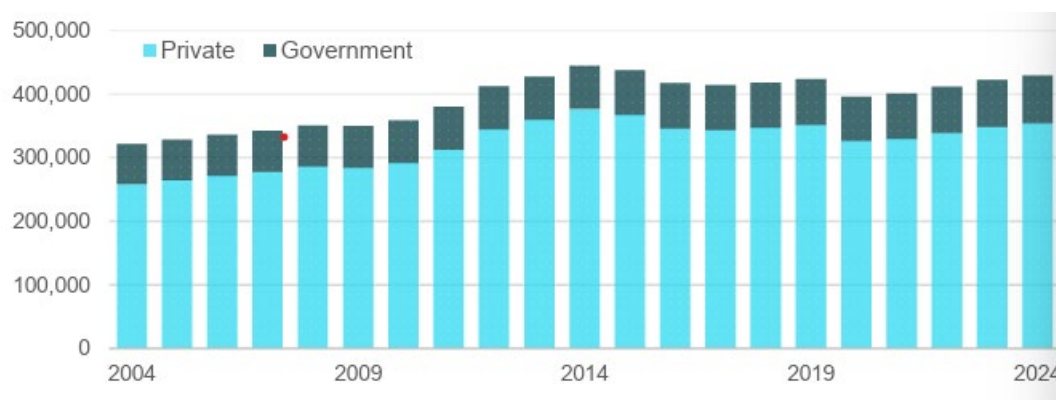
Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

North Dakota’s ratio of unemployed per job opening was 0.96 in June 2025, the latest month for which North Dakota data are available. One year prior, North Dakota’s ratio was 0.75. Among North Dakota’s 53 counties, fifteen reported a ratio less than one while thirty-seven reported a ratio greater than one. A ratio of less than one is an indication of more job openings than available labor supply.

North Dakota’s job openings rate was 2.6 percent in June 2025, the latest month for which North Dakota data are available. One year prior, North Dakota’s rate was 3.2 percent. The job openings rate is the percentage of all jobs in the economy open and available. A higher rate is an indicator of increased labor market demand.

Average Employment

In 2024, North Dakota’s total employment for all industries was 428,692. From 2004 to 2024, the total average employment across all industries grew by 107,584 (34 percent). From 2014-2024, total average employment decreased by 15,966 (4 percent). In 2024, most employment belonged to the private sector (83 percent).

Figure 7: North Dakota's average employment ten-year trend

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Average Annual Wage

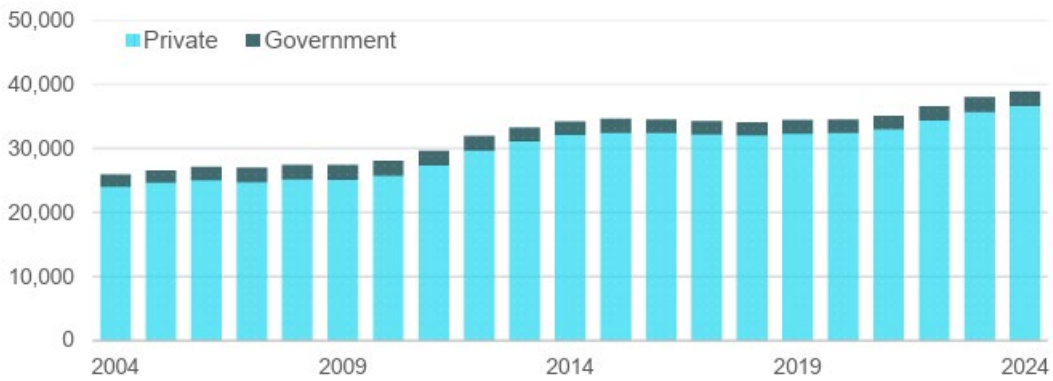
In 2024, North Dakota's average annual wage across all industries was \$65,715. From 2004 to 2024, average annual wages across all industries grew by \$36,728 (127 percent). From 2014 to 2024, average annual wages grew by \$14,860 (29 percent). In 2024, average annual wages were \$7,389 higher in the private sector.

Figure 8: North Dakota's average annual wage ten-year trend

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Establishments

In 2024, North Dakota had 38,936 business establishments. From 2004 to 2024, the number of establishments across all industries grew by 13,025 (50 percent). From 2014 to 2024, the number of establishments grew by 4,729 (14 percent). In 2024, most establishments belonged to the private sector (94 percent).

Figure 9: North Dakota's establishments ten-year trend

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

**NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL****COMMON EXIT POLICY****POLICY 2-14-01 (2)****PURPOSE:**

To inform all one-stop career center staff of the common exit policy in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IB Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker, Title III Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and Jobs for Veterans State Grant programs. The common exit is applied when participants are in two or more programs at the same time or have an overlap in their periods of participation.

POLICY:

The definition of common exit is:

The last qualifying, participant-level service, or the last staff-assisted or individualized service date that the individual participated in and can be in any one of the six programs. The auto-exit date is applied when there has been a 90-day gap of time since the last qualifying service date recorded on any of the six programs. This auto-exit date is calculated and applied by the MIS system and not a calculation applied by staff.

REFERENCE:

- (0) NDWDC Administrative Committee July 30, 2019
- (1) NDWDC Executive Committee October 5, 2020
- (2) NDWDC Administrative Committee February 14, 2023

REVIEW: February 14, 2026