

***The North Dakota Talent Initiative:
Workforce Development for Economic Development***

Background:

- North Dakota's economy is robust, many businesses are opening and expanding, the unemployment rate is low, and the labor force participation rate is high. However, the quantity and quality of the workforce is not available to support this increasing demand.
- North Dakota's Governor has established six major pillars for his administration and one of them is "Workforce Development for Economic Development". One of the desired outcomes is to "increase the incomes of North Dakotans" which will be accomplished through the attraction and retention of quality jobs.
- The Workforce Development Division of the North Dakota Department of Commerce and the Workforce Development Council has been charged with developing a comprehensive strategic plan to support this pillar and meet that goal.
- In the State Strategic Plan submitted to the United States Department of Labor, a number of performance goals were established for the North Dakota workforce system to respond to these expectations, including the identification of critical sectors, the development of quality workforce intelligence, the development of talent to meet the demand of the sectors, the expansion of the talent pool (including the tapping of underutilized populations), and the realignment of the workforce system to accomplish these performance goals.
- On July 31 and August 1, 2006, the North Dakota Workforce Development Council, the North Dakota Youth Development Council, and State Commission on National and Community Service, state legislators, and all key players of the state's workforce system, met to develop an action agenda to implement and achieve the strategic plan's goals. The action agenda was reviewed and revised on January 9 & 10, 2008.

Attached is a summary of the outcome of the strategic planning sessions. The sessions identified six talent strategies and committed the stakeholders and partners to ten areas for continuous improvement to meet the key workforce challenges of North Dakota.

- Since the August 2006 retreat, the Workforce Development Division has met with a number of partners and stakeholders to present the retreat outcomes and to develop support for its goals.

- The 2007 Legislative Session enacted legislation requiring the Workforce Development Division to develop a biennial statewide strategic plan focusing on workforce intelligence, talent attraction, career promotion, partnership expansion, and accountability.
- The Workforce Division is charged with monitoring workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction initiatives, developing and implementing the state's talent strategy, and developing and implementing a statewide intelligence coordination strategy. The Division is to consult with partners in the development and implementation of the strategy and to seek coordination and non-duplication.

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It was determined that the role of the workforce development and workforce training system in North Dakota is to prepare the workforce.

Workforce intelligence was identified as an essential component to the success of the Talent Initiative and should drive all decisions related to the Talent Initiative.

Major Outcome Goals:

- **Increase** the quantity and quality of North Dakota's workforce
 - Integrate soft skills, cultural diversity, and work readiness into all education and training offerings.
- **Transition** from a workforce to a talent force through a workforce improvement focus
 - Adopt a life-long learning model with opportunity to continually train up.
- **Reduce Unemployment** in counties and areas of the state with current unemployment above the state average.

Organizing Pillars, Principles, and Priorities:

- **Expand** Talent in North Dakota
 - (P-16 and Life-Long)
 - Apprenticeship

- Fill pipeline of new talent
- **Attract** Talent to North Dakota
 - American Indian Populations
 - Veteran Populations
 - Disability Populations
 - Special Populations
 - Out-of-state
 - Legal immigrants
- **Retain** Talent in North Dakota
 - Incumbent Workforce
 - Harnessing Baby Boomer's experience
 - Talent Management for business to retain best talent

Talent Initiative Strategies:

- Quality Workforce Intelligence
 - Drives all decisions
- Targeted Industry Cluster Support and Partnership
 - Private Sector at the Core
- Vertical (Operational) Alignment with Demand
 - Example: Labor Market Information
- Horizontal (Community) Alignment with Demand
 - Example: Target Industry Clusters
- System Expansion and Partnership
 - Inclusion of Trade Associations and Business Organizations
- Public and Stakeholder Awareness
 - Market ND as a place of choice

Ten Areas for Continuous Improvement:

1. Ensure **Council and Commission leadership** in attracting, retaining, and expanding talent by:
 - making all decisions based on workforce intelligence,
 - seeking both vertical and horizontal alignment with demand,
 - building strategic talent partnerships with the private sector and targeted industry clusters,
 - forging workforce system partnerships to achieve success in all talent initiatives, and
 - developing a broad public awareness and understanding of North Dakota's workforce needs.

2. Develop a **dynamic workforce intelligence system** with the vital information needed to confront North Dakota's talent crisis and to assess progress in addressing it.
3. **Disseminate key workforce intelligence to all stakeholders, businesses, and partner leadership and staff** so all North Dakotans may take appropriate actions to meet the workforce needs of individuals and businesses.
4. Focus on **workforce improvement, preparation, and lifelong learning** by improving the quality and quantity of training and education available to North Dakota's residents, ensuring the offerings respond to employer and skill demand, and making these development opportunities affordable and accessible.
5. **Increase the labor force participation rate and expand the available talent pool** by reaching, serving, preparing, and connecting those not currently in the labor force, including Native Americans, Veterans, Disability, and other target populations.
6. Give **emphasis to the emerging worker talent pipeline by focusing on young people**, improving the connections between school and work, promoting demand careers, and encouraging them to stay in North Dakota.
7. Build **even stronger workforce system partnerships to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability** through the reducing of duplication, sharing resources, and adopting a common action agenda and strategies for talent attraction, retention, and expansion.
8. **Improve the workforce system interface with employers, targeted industry trade associations and organized labor** to more effectively meet their workforce needs by developing strategic partnerships and ensuring service responsiveness.
9. **Promote North Dakota as a great place to live** and work to attract and retain talent.
10. Promote **inclusion of soft skills, cultural diversity & work readiness** into all training and education offerings.