

**Minutes of the
Q3 Workforce Development Council
ND Job Service
1601 E Century Avenue, Bismarck ND
Thursday, August 22, 2024**

Members present: Jace Beehler, Michelle Axtman, Josh Blackaby, DJ Campbell, Jason Ehlert, Becca Cruger, Tifanie Gelinske, Cindy Griffin, Mark Gorenflo – proxy for Chancellor Hagerott, Tim Johnson, Howard Klug, Guy Moos, Matt Marshall, Emily O’Brien, Sara Mitzel – proxy for Stan Schauer, Wayde Sick, Taya Spelhaug, Jim Upgren, Kasper Ziegler
Guests present: Carolyn Laird, Zuzana Cepla, Rebekah Smith
Staff present: Phil Davis, Ruth Lacher, Tammy Barstad, Sherri Frieze

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Cindy Griffin, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. welcoming members and guests to the ND Job Service Workforce Center and those via the TEAMS video/audio conferencing platform.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Approval of Minutes

Motion: It was moved by Howard Klug, seconded by Taya Spelhaug, to approve the April 2, 2024, minutes.
Motion carried.

LMI & WIOA UPDATE

Current LMI Report and the Basic Skills Deficient Policy

Phil Davis

Phil talked about the Labor Market Report for July 2024.

- ND Unemployment Rate for June = 2.2% vs. 4.3% nationwide.
- ND Labor Force Participation Rate = 68.9% vs. 62.7% nationwide.
- The top 5 occupational groups with open jobs for July are:
Healthcare, Sales & Related, Management, Installation, Maintenance & Repair, Transportation.
- Open jobs in ND = 13,179
- 3.4% down from July 2023
- 10.2% down from prior month

Upcoming Job Fairs, Webinars, and Podcasts were also discussed.

Basic Skills Deficient Policy

Phil walked through the verbiage changes to the policy that is regarded as an efficiency edit for an extension of one year, compared to the current six-month testing time that is listed in the policy. This policy was approved this month by the Executive Committee, rather than the Administrative Committee, due to the lack of a quorum.

GLOBAL TALENT SUMMIT

Katie Ralston Howe

Zuzana Cepla and Rebekah Smith, LaMP

- 80 attendees, lawyers, legislators, employers, organizations, associations.
- Recruitment of global talent and pathways to hire from abroad.
- Partnerships were created and commitments from employers to strive for better legal pathways along with better momentum.

The summit was very successful, championing ND to be one of the first to hold this type of a summit.

CRITERIA FOR WDC RECOMMENDATIONS
Katie Ralston Howe

- Statewide Impact
- Encourage Private Sector Partnership
- Coordinate and Maximize Federal Resources
- Scalable Solutions
- Balance Current and Future Needs
- Consider Priorities vs. Programs

Considerations

- Build on work completed to date where possible
- Recommend actionable strategies (both short & long term)

Metrics

- How will we know these recommendations are successful

Partners & Process

- Engage early
- Collaborate
- Work to understand what's possible/allowable
- Discuss process for achievement.
- Create recommendations with others not for others

Endorsements

- Initiatives previously recommended by WDC
- Efforts led by other boards, agencies that align with WDC priorities and support workforce in ND

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL
Survey will be sent out to the members to rank the recommendations.

Recruitment and Retention – Becca Cruger

RECOMMENDATION 1 (Original)

The Workforce Development Council recommends support for the following opportunities identified with the Office of Legal Immigration:

- 1) Pilot relocation and job placement efforts for legal immigrants and work authorized individuals residing within the United States.
- 2) Develop a pilot grant program that would cost share transportation and housing to support foreign-born workers.
- 3) Integrate talent attraction advertising campaigns targeted to foreign-born workers within the Find the Good Life framework.

RECOMMENDATION 1 (Modified)

The Workforce Development Council recommends support for the following opportunities identified with the Office of Legal Immigration:

- 1) Pilot relocation and job placement efforts for qualified candidates residing within the United States.
- 2) Develop a pilot grant program that would cost share transportation to North Dakota and temporary housing to support relocated.
- 3) Integrate talent attraction advertising campaigns targeted to foreign-born workers within the Find the Good Life framework.

DISCUSSION:

To align modified language with broader recruitment efforts for Find The Good Life.

Motion: It was moved by Jim Upgren, seconded by DJ Campbell, to approve the modified recommendation with modified language to include Find The Good Life. carried. Motion carried.

ENDORSEMENTS

- Sustaining Office of Legal Immigration and changing the name to the Global Talent Office.
- Sustaining Find the Good Life National Talent Attraction Program operations and national marketing to continue management of a national talent pipeline and support for communities and employers to attract and retain new workforce.
- Investment in tourism initiatives to create and enhance place that attract visitors and provide entertainment for residents.
- Investment into community development initiatives that create safe, healthy, and welcoming communities which is essential for attracting and retaining workers to North Dakota.

Motion: It was moved by Wayde Sick, seconded by Jim Upgren, to approve the Endorsements. Motion carried.

Career Exploration – Wayde Sick

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Workforce Development Council recommends amending the Technical Skills Training Grant, to allow for funds to support student learner on-the-job training opportunities facilitated by or in partnership with employers that align with the in-demand jobs list.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Workforce Development Council recommends the introduction of a comprehensive apprenticeship packet.

- a. State staffing to support the North Dakota US Department of Labor; Office of Apprenticeship
- b. Development of an Apprenticeship Scholarship
- c. Support to develop and expand quality pre-apprenticeship (QPA) programs at area career and technology centers and comprehensive high schools.
- d. Develop marketing to increase awareness and utilization of apprenticeship pathways.

DISCUSSION:

Funding amounts discussed.

Creation of ND US Department of Labor; Office of Apprenticeship to increase operating funding

Increase number of apprenticeship scholarships per biennium

Verbiage to include agency support in Recommendation 2

Motion: It was moved by Taya Spelhaug, seconded by Jason Ehlert, to approve the Recommendations. Motion carried.

Removing Barriers – Alicia Halle and Sara Mitzel

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Workforce Development Council recommends \$75,000 funding for the Adult Learning Centers to provide transcript and curriculum translation services to New Americans and Immigrants.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Workforce Development Council recommends expansion of Vocational Rehab (VR) services to justice-involved individuals with disabilities from incarceration through reentry.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Workforce Development Council recommends appropriating funding for development of an Accommodation Fund for ND employers to provide disability related accommodations to qualifying employees.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Workforce Development Council recommends appropriating funding for development of a Disability Council to provide the State as a model employer implementation guidance.

ENDORSEMENTS

- Investment to increase childcare infrastructure statewide.
- Investment into strategies that would increase available affordability and multi-unit housing statewide.

DISCUSSION

Verbiage to be updated along with a name change for the Disability Council.

Motion: It was moved by Jason Ehlert, seconded by Tim Johnson, to approve the Recommendations. Motion carried.

**WORKING LUNCH
Around The Room Updates**

Members gave a brief overview of current issues in their industry.

Technical Skills Gap – Erik Christenson – Janna Pastir on his behalf

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Workforce Development Council recommends the development of a pilot grant funding program to support North Dakota employers implementing AI business solutions that create efficiencies and increase productivity for small business, nonprofits.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Workforce Development Council recommends creation of a competitive pilot grant program to fund digital skilling initiatives.

Motion: It was moved by Mark Gorenflo, seconded by DJ Campbell, to approve the Recommendations. Motion carried.

Occupational Licensure Reform – Rep. Cindy Schreiber Beck – Katie Ralston Howe on her behalf

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Workforce Development Council recommends the development of a clearing house within the Department of Commerce for professionals and employers to file concerns and complaints related to occupational and professional boards and licensing process challenges.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Workforce Development Council recommends uniform training for all board members to increase understanding of century code related to board administration and open records laws.

ENDORSEMENTS

- Endorsements for policies that expedite pathway to licensure for current and new North Dakotans, as long as the healthy and safety of North Dakota citizens is protected.
- The U.S. Department of Defense recommendation that encourages the inclusion of military connected individuals on licensing boards to identify an existing board member to serve as the point of contact for military connected applicants and licensees.

Motion: It was moved by Jason Ehlert, seconded by Tim Johnson, to approve the Recommendations. Motion carried.

WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEM UPDATE

Katie Ralston Howe

Department of Commerce submitted an RFP for vendor to conduct a statewide Ecosystem Study.

- Statewide employer survey
- Map current workforce system, how partners interact, share data, etc.
- Identify what role(s) local organizations, colleges and universities can play at the local and/or regional level to enhance or expand state-level strategies that address workforce.
- Facilitate strategic planning with the WDC to produce a statewide strategic plan.
- Assess the current structure of statewide workforce systems and programs/services and provide recommendations to create efficiencies and/or improve collaboration.

The timeline for review of RFPs will occur in September and the contract will be awarded in October.

Member Terms

Reappointment

Three members have completed their three-year term. They are eligible for reappointment to another three-year term if they choose.

- Becca Cruger
- Kellie Carlson
- Dusty Jensen

Non eligible for Reappointment

These members have completed two consecutive terms of three years and are non-eligible.

- Taya Spelhaug
- Jason Ehlert
- Tony Grindberg
- Lyn James
- Tifanie Gelinske
- Tim Johnson

WDC Bylaws state that a “members can stay in their seat, until appointment is made to fill their seat.”

NEXT STEPS

Katie Ralston Howe

Katie will include edits to the drafted report of recommendations, based on today’s discussions, that will include a blanket endorsement supported by the WDC. The recommendations will be sent to the Governor’s office for their final approval before the recommendations are rolled out in the autumn of 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Howard Klug, seconded by DJ Campbell, to adjourn the WDC meeting. Motion carried. With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.