

MINUTES OF THE
Workforce Development Council
Thursday, March 3, 2022
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
**NDSU Extension Center – Hwy 281 N 67th Avenue Carrington ND
and online via TEAMS meeting**

Members present: Dave Farnsworth, Pat Bertagnolli, Becca Cruger, Jason Ehlert, Kellie Fritz, Tiffanie Gelinske, Cindy Griffin, Tony Grindberg, Chancellor Hagerott, Katie Ralston Howe, Lyn James, Tim Johnson, Nathan Joraanstad, Howard Klug, Landis Larson, Matt Marshall, Guy Moos, Stan Schauer, Cindy Schreiber - Beck, Don Shilling, Wayde Sick, Taya Spelhaug, Arnie Strebe, Damian Schlinger, James Upgren,

Guests present: Jessica Thomasson, Kay Larson, Karlee Griffin, Laurie Dietz

Staff present: Phil Davis, Tammy Barstad, Sherri Frieze

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Dave Farnsworth, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. welcoming members and guests. Sherri Frieze, Boards & Commissions E.A., conducted the roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: It was moved by Pat Bertagnolli, seconded by Howard Klug, to approve the November 18, 2021, minutes. Motion carried.

IMPACT OF CHILDCARE ON WORKFORCE
Jessica Thomasson and Kay Larson
Department of Human Services

Workforce element

- Childcare needs affect thousands of working families across the state.
 - 73% parents in workforce – 44, 000 ND households who have children younger than 5 years of age, likely have at least some need for childcare.
 - 1 in 10 eligible children (26,000) ages 13 and younger live in households where parents' earnings are less than 200% of federal poverty level
 - 1,360+ approved childcare providers are licensed to serve 39, 478.
 - 20% of the state's population lives in a county that was considered a childcare desert in 2020.

Eliminating Childcare as a Barrier to Work Requires a Comprehensive Approach

- Affordability
- Quality
- Access

Childcare assistance can help working families with childcare costs

- The Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP) helps pay a portion of the cost of childcare for working families
 - 2,580 average number of children served per month
 - \$16.3 million is given as support to families
 - \$523 is an average payment per child per month

Employer Sponsored Childcare Benefits

- Paid Leave
- Infants in the Workplace
- Flexible Schedule
- Fixed Schedules
- Dependent Care Assistance Programs
- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Child Care Subsidies
- Backup childcare
- Contract with local providers
- Subsidize space for a local provider
- Business 10
- Operate childcare onsite for community

Removing Childcare as a Barrier to Workforce will take a Bold and Comprehensive Strategy

- **Quality**
- **Affordability**
- **Access**
 - **Childcare Assistance** – increase investment in Childcare Assistance Programs to help make childcare more affordable for working families who earn modest income
 - **Best in Class** – increase number of grant funded Best in Class programs serving children in the year before they enter kindergarten
 - **ND3** – Build a public private partnership that creates a shared funding model to help with childcare costs for working parents of young children
 - **Shared Services** – Facilitate greater business operating expertise and support to childcare operators to help assure business sustainability

Discussion:

- Co op model to help with childcare assistance for rural areas.
- Access piece could be expanded on, flex pace program for childcare centers – best practices across the state
- Reduced interest loans, sometimes childcare does not have the capacity to payback the loans.
- How to help incentivize and encourage a sustainable operation for childcare, economics make it tough for making ends meet.
- This creates an opportunity to create a small workgroup with the RB and R&R subcommittees to support the work of DHS in this area.

LOCAL WORKFORCE & CHILDCARE

Karlee Griffin, City of Carrington

Laurie Dietz, Chamber of Commerce

Karlee talked about the major employers, main goals, and current economic projects for the City of Carrington. Laurie talked about the challenges Carrington faces such as affordable housing, shortage of workforce and the need for daycare providers.

WIOA/NGA/WORKFORCE GRANT UPDATE

Katie Ralston Howe

Phil Davis

Emergency Dislocated Worker

Awarded \$510 thousand over the last two years with eighty individuals that were dislocated due to COVID were sent to training in various tech areas. The grant is wrapping up with \$8,000 left to spend for training.

Unified State Plan

The WIOA requires each WDC to develop and submit a comprehensive four-year plan that needs to be updated every 2 years. The plan recently went through updating and had a public comment period for two weeks, that just closed. The plan will be uploaded to the Federal Department of Labor portal soon. The next plan will be updated in 2024.

NGA

North Dakota and five other states were selected for the second phase of the NGA's Workforce Innovation Network (NGA WIN) last year in November. The states will deploy cross-agency teams to identify and implement strategies that advance digital skill development for employees to participate in work, education, or training. The \$100 thousand dollar grant will be used to hire a contractor. The focus will be on minority populations and rural communities that do not have access to training.

Team members for the NGA WIN, include NGA technical assistants, Katie Ralston, Commerce Dept.; Phil Davis, Job Service ND; Maria Nest, Governor's Office; Sara Mitzel, DPI; and Taya Spelhaug, Microsoft. At the second quarter WDC June meeting, more conversation and more comprehensive reporting will be brought forward, along with the legislative recommendation that should be discussed regarding funding or policy changes.

Commerce Workforce Grants

Regional Workforce Innovation program (RWIP)

- \$15M total
 - 1 application per region is allowed.
 - 25% match
 - Sustainable initiatives
 - Project funded will need to identify their goals and timeline to receive more funding once milestone is reached.
- A community cannot use these grants for administrative costs for program administration.

Technical Skills Training Grants

- \$3M total
- 1:1 match
- Two tracks
 - Accelerated Reskilling
 - CDL, CAN, welding, coating
 - Up to \$100 thousand with a 1:1 match
 - Non degree programs
 - Internal Upskilling
 - Safety training for upscaling current workers.
 - Up to \$50 thousand with a 1:1 match per program.
 - Multiple funding windows.

Workforce Innovation Grant

- \$2M total
- 1:1 match
- Three tracks
 - Innovative or unconventional initiatives
 - Recruitment in areas of high unemployment
 - Provide match for visa costs for industries most impacted by pandemic
 - Manufacturing, Healthcare, tourism, and international recruitment for companies wanting international workers. Timing is not a quick process, and so this is still being worked through.

A staggered rollout of the grants will happen.

OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATION PROCESS

Katie Ralston Howe

I. Guiding Principles

- Statewide Impact
- Encourage private sector partnership
- Coordinate and maximize federal resources
- Scalable solutions
- Balance current and future needs
- Consider Priorities vs. Programs.

Guiding Question – what makes the most sense to put resources behind right now?

II. Considerations

- Build on work completed to date where possible
- Recommend actionable strategies – both short and long term.

III. Metrics

- Determine the metrics that will be used to measure success
- How will we know these recommendations are successful?

IV. Partners and Process

- Engage early
- Collaborate
- Work to understand what's possible/allowable
- Discuss process for achievement.

GOAL

- 5-10 recommendations total
- Endorsements – what makes sense for the WDC to lead vs support.
- Task force for childcare and a place for the WDC to endorse their work, solutions they may develop.
- Comprehensive, including policy changes and/or funding requests
- Appropriate agencies must be on board with funding requests as these will impact their budgets, staff to administer funds.

TIMELINE

March 3

Preliminary recommendations
Invite feedback

June 2

Short list of recommendations
WDC will vote to approve

June 15

Recommendations are sent to the Gov. office

COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

James Leiman

Commerce has been asked to lead a systems level integration process to help mitigate the workforce challenge. This will be critical, and Commerce will apply more creative measures to workforce. Commerce will map federal programs to find the best use of all and apply the integration of the subcommittee recommendations.

SUBCOMMITTEE EMERGING THEMES/RECOMMENDATIONS

Subcommittee Chairs of the Career Exploration/Technical Skills Gap, Recruit and Retain, Removing Barriers, and the Occupational Licensure Reform presented their recommendations to the council.

CAREER EXPLORATION/TECHNICAL SKILLS GAP UPDATE & DISCUSSION
Don Shilling

Emerging Themes/Recommendations

- CTE Centers – Clarify and Support the current initiative
- Career Exploration – Increased Focus in Schools
- Apprenticeship, Internship, and Job Shadowing
- Business Education Collaboration

RECRUIT & RETAIN UPDATE & DISCUSSION
Pat Bertagnolli

Emerging Themes/Recommendations

- Sustained funding for talent attraction
- Develop mechanism for local workforce funding
- Hiring regional recruiters
- Statewide campaign for business to include service industry experience in preferred/minimum job requirements

POPULATIONS WITH BARRIERS
Phil Davis

Emerging Themes/Recommendations

- Continued Support for Previously Proposed Justice Involved Pilot Program (DoCR), Voc. Rehab, JSND, F5)
- Native American Workforce Support
- New American Workforce Support
- Affordable Daycare
- Digital Literacy Skill Gaps
- Citizens without GEDs

OCCUPATIONAL LICENSURE REFORM UPDATE & DISCUSSION
Katie Ralston Howe

Emerging Themes/Recommendations

- Fair Chance Laws
 - Remove vague or generic terms such as “moral turpitude” and “good character.”
 - Establish and make public criminal convictions that will disqualify an applicant from obtaining a license
- Establish an ongoing system for data collection
- Joining new Interstate Compacts to promote mobility

Next Steps

- A Survey Monkey referencing today’s presented subcommittee recommendations will be created for council input to pull 5 – 10 recommendations from the four subcommittees, that will help vote on at the 2nd quarter WDC meeting in Watford City in June.
- A workgroup from the R&R and RB subcommittees will be created for Childcare
- Subcommittees may need to meet more frequently and break into workgroups on specific themes to build out.
- GNDC Workforce Policy Committee – Andrea Pfennig connection if interested in joining the committee

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 2:00 p.m. Motion carried.