

**Minutes of the
Q2 Workforce Development Council
Hughes Educational Center
806 N Washington Street, Bismarck ND
June 24, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Members present: Anthony Bauer, Representative Mike Berg, Tara Berger, Josh Blackaby, DJ Campbell, Kellie Carlson, Phil Davis, Mike Fridolfs, Katie Ralston Howe, Dusty Jensen, Lisa Johnson for Brent Sanford, Mike Keller, Howard Klug, Adam Kidwell, Matt Marshall, Sara Mitzel, Raquel Nachatilo, Jacy Schafer, Wayde Sick, Jim Upgren, Scott Wirth.

Staff present: Brenda Zastoupil, Robyn Throlson, Nigel Haarstad, Janna Pastir, Sherri Frieze

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman DJ Campbell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., welcoming WDC members and guests online and in the room with Roll Call conducted.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Approval of Minutes

WDC and Executive Committee Minutes

MOTION: It was moved by Lisa Johnson seconded by Jacy Schafer, to approve the Q1 February 5, 2026, WDC minutes. No discussion, all in favor. Motion carried.

MOTION: It was moved by Wayde Sick and seconded by Phil Davis, to approve Q1 February 5, 2026, Administrative Committee minutes. No discussion, all in favor. Motion carried.

MOTION: It was moved by Raquel Nachatilo and seconded by Josh Blackaby to approve the Q3 September 3, 2025, Executive Committee minutes. No discussion, all in favor. Motion carried.

LMI and POLICY UPDATES

Phil Davis

LMI:

Phil talked about the Labor Market Report for May 2026

- ND unemployment rate = 1.9% vs. 4.1% nationwide
- ND Labor Force Participation Rate = 69.5% vs. 61.7% nationwide
- The top 5 occupational groups with open jobs for January:
 - Healthcare, Transportation, Sales & Related, Management, Education & Library.
- Open jobs in ND = 12,466

Upcoming Spring Job Fairs:

- Fair Chance Job Fair – June 4 in Bismarck, Fargo, and Grand Forks

Policy Updates:

Phil gave an overview of the eight WIOA policies that were updated and approved by the Administrative Committee.

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| • In School Youth Eligibility | • Common Exit |
| • Out of School Youth Eligibility | • Data Validation |
| • Adult Priority of Service | • Support Services |
| • Self Sufficiency Standard | • Allowable Outreach Activities |

IN DEMAND OCCUPATIONS LIST

Katie Ralston Howe

Nigel Haarstad

Each year the WDC reviews and updates the In Demand Occupations List. This list is designed to support the WIOA programs, ND Career Builders, ND Career Builders, Career & Technical Education, Workforce Pell, Operation Intern, Technical Skills Training Grant and others.

Katie talked about the criteria needed, and Nigel walked through the cadence, statute, methodology, scoring, and approval process needed by the council. The list will go live to the public on July 1, 2026. A secondary list will be pulled together by Nigel that can be shared with partners.

MOTION: It was moved by Scott Wirth, seconded by Jim Upgren, to approve the In Demand Occupations List as presented. No discussion, all in favor. Motion carried.

WORKFORCE CABINET UPDATES

Budget Data Call

Katie Ralston Howe

Katie shared information from the Workforce cabinet discussing how to build a unified strategy and workforce budget that will live in different agencies. Current funding, programs, and investments in workforce were all discussed. ND's 80 workforce development programs were reduced to 66, with 28 being state-funded, 26 federal-funded, and 12 programs use both state and federal funding.

REVIEW AND VOTE: WDC RECOMMENDATIONS

Katie Ralston Howe

Subcommittees met this past winter to focus on top workforce priorities for ND. Eighteen drafted recommendations were presented to the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, eleven were identified and five were listed as high priorities. Katie walked through the list of recommendations and members voiced opinions. A survey will be sent out to the members to assess the top priorities, and a public version will be ready in August.

MOTION: It was moved by Phil Davis, seconded by Jim Upgren, to approve the WDC Recommendations. No discussion, all in favor. Motion carried.

WORKFORCE PELL

Katie Ralston Howe

Katie walked through some of the eligibility requirements for the Workforce Pell Grant Program. The program is a federal initiative to expand Pell grant eligibility to short-term high-quality workforce training programs that prepare learners for high skill, high wage, or in demand industry sector occupations. The state may have a few programs that could fit the criteria of the program. The Pell Grant Program will go into effect July 1st. The state's goal is to have the governance policy and application procedures ready at the WDC August meeting.

NEXT STEPS

Katie Ralston Howe

- Q3 meeting date in August
- Budget submissions update
- Recommendation update
- Supt. Bachmeier presentation
- Wayde Sick presentation
- Possible other presentations

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned unanimously at 1:30 p.m.