



## Growing ND by the Numbers

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#### What is the Labor Force?

The labor force, sometimes referred to as the Civilian Labor Force, consists of all individuals employed or actively looking for work. It excludes individuals under age 16, members of the armed forces and individuals who are neither employed nor seeking employment.

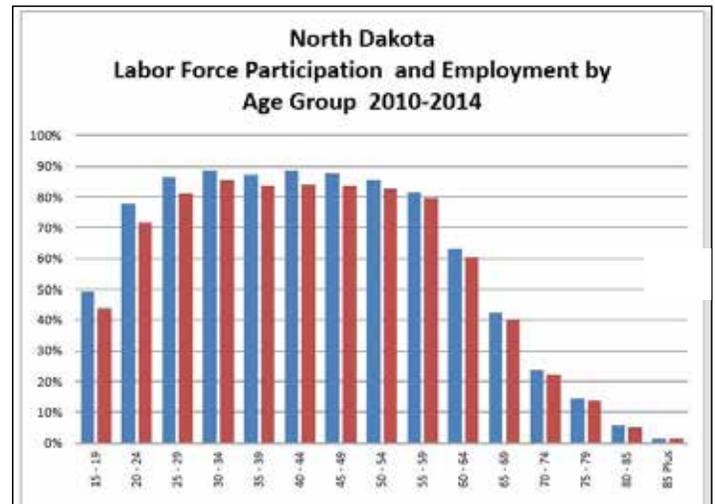
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Glossary

### Employment and Labor Force Participation

North Dakota has among the highest labor force participation rates of the 50 states. Data from the American Community 5-year Survey (ACS) shows North Dakota tied with Nebraska for the second highest after Alaska in the percentage of residents age 16 and older who work.

On average 3.1 percent of respondents to the ACS survey in the state indicated they were unemployed.

When examining unemployment percentages by age group, North Dakota was estimated to have the lowest unemployment rate for all age ranges under age 65. The state also had



Labor force participation rises rapidly from age 16 into the early 20's. On the other end of the age range, participation begins to drop off in the 50's and steeply declines prior to age 70. Source: ACS 14 5-YR File S2301 and PUMS Data

the lowest unemployment rate among both sexes. The state ranked lowest for unemployment for Whites and Hispanics of

any race. The state also ranked second lowest for unemployment of Blacks

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### Labor Force Participation and Employment by County

Of the state's 53 counties, 35 had labor force participation rates for ages 16 and older, higher than the national average 63.9 percent, while 18 counties had rates below the national rate. The county with the highest participation rate was Cass at 76 percent, followed by Stark, Ward, Morton and Burleigh. The

county with the lowest participation rate was Rolette at 51 percent, followed by Benson, Sioux, Hettinger, Wells and Emmons. Statewide, when individuals do participate in the labor force, they are far more likely to be employed than searching for work. Nationally only 58 percent of the population was

employed. In North Dakota that rate was estimated to be 67 percent. Cass had the highest rate at 73 percent. Sioux County had the lowest at 45 percent.

Source: ACS 14 5-YR File S2301

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### **Gender in the Labor Force**

*Males have a higher labor force participation rate in all 50 states, although in North Dakota the difference is less than nationally. This is true at all age groups with the exception of the age group 15-19 where females are more likely to be employed than males. The two sexes are almost matched for civilian employment through age 29, however, males have a higher representation in the armed forces in this age range.*

Source: ACS 14 5-YR File S2301

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and Asians. For American Indians the state ranked 5<sup>th</sup> lowest and for Pacific Islanders at 10<sup>th</sup> lowest.

In the state labor force, participation rises rapidly from age 16 into the 20's. On the other end of the age range, participation begins to drop off in the 50's and steeply declines prior to age 70. Individuals in the ages of 30-50 tend to have

the highest labor force participation. In addition, these ages are more likely to work full-time than part time. As an example in the age group 15-19, 49 percent of the respondents indicate they participate in the labor force, but of those only about 13 percent indicate they are working full-time. By the time individuals reach ages 30-35 that percentage has climbed to

74 percent. Conversely in the older age groups, full-time work begins to drop off. For example, in the age group 60-64, only 48 percent of all individuals in this age range indicate they are working full-time and drops further to 24 percent for the age group 65 to 69.

Source: ACS 14 5-YR File S2301 and PUMS data

## Who's Not In the Labor Force?

Data tends to be readily available on demographic characteristics of who is working. However few tables are produced that indicate who is not working or provide the reasons why they may not be either employed or seeking work.

Between 2010 and 2014, an average of 166,000 individuals ages 16 and older were not in the North Dakota labor force. However, once you eliminate those individuals who were in school, above the age of typical retirement, with disabilities, in high income households or appear to be stay at home parents with children

present, the number of remaining residents drops to an estimated 56,700. When we further eliminate those respondents who indicate they have a disability of some kind this population drops further to approximately 44,100. Next, when we eliminate individuals in households with incomes in excess of \$100,000 per year, the number is reduced further to about 32,000 residents. We then filtered out those non-labor force participants who reside in households with children present, and the number of non-labor force participating individuals was reduced to 21,000.

This remaining population tends to be older with 73 percent age 50 and older. About the same percentage reported being married; the majority of those have a spouse in the workforce. The majority of this group have access to a vehicle and reside in owned housing.

The reasons why individuals choose not to participate in the labor force is not asked as part of the survey. Care of elderly, dependency issues or feeling they have sufficient resources to live on may be factors in their decision.

Source: ACS 14 5-YR PUMS Data

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