



WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

Thursday, September 28, 2023
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative Shannon Roers Jones, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Shannon Roers Jones, Dick Anderson, Landon Bahl, Josh Christy*, Hamida Dakane, Mike Motschenbacher, Scott Wagner, Jonathan Warrey; Senators Jeff Barta, Ryan Braunberger, Michael A. Wobbema

Members absent: Representative Jay Fisher; Senator Randy A. Burckhard

Others present: Senator Todd Beard, Williston

See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

**Attended remotely*

Mr. Dustin A. Richard, Counsel, Legislative Council, presented a memorandum entitled [Supplementary Rules of Operation and Procedure of the North Dakota Legislative Management](#).

WORKFORCE TRAINING CENTER FUNDING DISTRIBUTION MODEL STUDY

Ms. Shannon Full, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce, and Dr. Jenna Mueller, Executive Director, Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber Foundation, provided an overview ([Appendix B](#)) of workforce needs in North Dakota. In response to questions from committee members, they noted:

- The rate at which individuals are hired in the United States is insufficient to fill job vacancies.
- In North Dakota, there are only 38 workers available for every 100 jobs posted. The worker to job ratio illustrates the workforce crisis in the United States.
- Employers are using geolocating technologies and the Internet to assist in finding applicants for open positions, especially in rural communities.
- Investment in career academies is helping to generate a more skilled workforce in North Dakota.

Mr. Richard presented a memorandum entitled [Workforce Training Center Funding Distribution Model Study - Background Memorandum](#).

Mr. Wayne Sick, Director and Executive Officer, Department of Career and Technical Education, provided testimony ([Appendix C](#)) relating to the founding of TrainND and the committee's study of the workforce training center funding distribution model. In response to questions from committee members, he noted:

- The workforce funding distribution model in now repealed North Dakota Century Code Section 52-08-12 was based on covered employment in each TrainND region.
- Section 52-08-12 was repealed by Senate Bill No. 2109 (2003).
- Despite the repeal, the State Board for Career and Technical Education continues to base funding on the covered employment numbers provided by Job Service North Dakota.
- A new formula incorporating a combination of different variables may be appropriate for today's workforce climate.

Dr. Doug Darling, President, Lake Region State College, provided testimony relating to TrainND and the committee's study of the workforce training center funding distribution model. In response to questions from committee members, he noted:

- Workforce development and workforce training are two different concepts. Workforce development consists of credit-based programs preparing individuals for a career; whereas workforce training is designed for incumbent workers to advance and learn new skills.
- Training programs under TrainND are customized for each participating business.
- TrainND was created to ensure workforce training occurred throughout the state.
- TrainND provides businesses a single point of contact for training needs.
- The four TrainND institutions, located at Bismarck State College, Lake Region State College, North Dakota State College of Science, and Williston State College, work collaboratively to offer a productive and efficient training program.
- The needs of the four regions are vastly different.
- A potential funding model could consider a base-level payment to all institutions as well as performance-based metrics.

Ms. Sara Vollmer, Dean, Continuing Education and TrainND Southwest, Bismarck State College, provided testimony ([Appendix D](#)) relating to the TrainND program powered by Bismarck State College and the committee's study of the workforce training center funding distribution model. In response to questions from committee members, she noted:

- The training provided at TrainND Southwest is driven by the demands of businesses in the region.
- A new funding model could consider covered employment, a baseline allocation, the number of full-time employees in each region, different success rates, and performance measurements.
- TrainND institutions work with other higher education institutions and career academies in the state.
- Each TrainND region charges a business the fair market value for administering training programs.

Mr. David Steffen, Executive Director, TrainND Northeast, Lake Region State College, provided testimony ([Appendix E](#)) relating to the TrainND program powered by Lake Region State College and the committee's study of the workforce training center funding distribution model. In response to questions from committee members, he noted:

- Training is offered either in an open enrollment setting or through a contract with a specific business.
- Businesses often request courses from TrainND which teach individuals foundational workplace skills.
- One of the primary training courses offered at TrainND Northeast pertains to active shooter training.
- A new funding model should include base funding for all institutions.

Ms. Susie Richards Carlson, Director, TrainND Southeast, North Dakota State College of Science, provided testimony ([Appendix F](#)) relating to the TrainND program powered by North Dakota State College of Science and the committee's study of the workforce training center funding distribution model. In response to questions from committee members, she noted:

- Training should not be viewed merely as an expense, but also as an economic investment.
- Due to the disparities between the regions, the use of a past performance metric may not be the best metric for the funding model.
- A proposed funding model could split 75 percent of the appropriation equally between the four regions and allocate the remaining 25 percent of the funds to the regions based on covered employment.
- The price for training has increased modestly in the past year.

Mr. Kenley Nebeker, Executive Director, TrainND Northwest, Williston State College, provided testimony ([Appendix G](#)) relating to the TrainND program powered by Williston State College and the committee's study of the workforce training center funding distribution model. In response to questions from committee members, he noted:

- Working with career and technical education centers offers scalable training opportunities.

- TrainND Northwest is accredited under the International Accreditors for Continuing Education and Training, which is the highest standard of training.
- The TrainND Foundation operates exclusively in TrainND Northwest.
- A new funding model should use performance metrics to determine where training demands are greatest in the state.

Senator Todd Beard, Williston, provided testimony relating to the committee's study of the workforce training center funding distribution model and the origins of and reasons for introducing Senate Bill No. 2122 (2023). He noted:

- The funding model is not equitable to TrainND Northwest.
- A preferred model would split the appropriation equally among the four TrainND regions.

STATE OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP STUDY

Mr. Richard presented a memorandum entitled [State Office of Apprenticeship Study - Background Memorandum](#).

Mr. Sick and Mr. Jason Ehlert, President, North Dakota's Building Trades Unions, provided testimony ([Appendix H](#)) relating to the committee's study of the feasibility and desirability of creating a state office of apprenticeship. In response to questions from committee members, they noted:

- Apprenticeship is a proven mechanism to bring people into the workforce.
- Apprenticeships have expanded beyond traditional trade programs.
- Advantages offered by the federal Office of Apprenticeship include standardization, expertise, oversight, and influence over national policies.
- Disadvantages associated with the federal Office of Apprenticeship include lack of local specificity, more complex bureaucratic processes, and limited staff members.
- Advantages of the establishment of a State Apprenticeship Agency include local tailoring of apprenticeship programs, easier access to apprenticeship staff, faster response time, and better understanding of local labor market dynamics.
- Disadvantages of establishing a State Apprenticeship Agency include system fragmentation, the need for reciprocity agreements between other State Apprenticeship Agencies, and less national influence.
- Some states have adopted a hybrid approach that utilizes the federal Office of Apprenticeship but uses state agencies to hire individuals to support the federal office.
- Increased communication between the state and industries will help grow pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.
- The addition of a State Apprenticeship Agency may allow a student to progress through an apprenticeship program at an accelerated rate.

Mr. Nathan Svihovec, Commissioner, North Dakota Department of Labor and Human Rights, provided testimony ([Appendix I](#)) relating to the committee's study of the feasibility and desirability of creating a state office of apprenticeship.

REPORTS

Mr. Svihovec provided a report ([Appendix J](#)) on the status of the commissioner's review and meetings with each occupational board under Title 43, the Education Standards and Practices Board, and the State Board of Law Examiners to establish a strategy to expedite licensure of out-of-state practitioners and revise continuing education requirements.

SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE COMPACT STUDY

Ms. Katie Ralston Howe, Director, Workforce Development Division, Department of Commerce, provided testimony ([Appendix K](#)) relating to licensure, apprenticeship, and immigration needs relating to commerce and workforce in North Dakota. In response to questions from committee members, she noted:

- Interstate compacts tend to create ease and mobility for individuals in specific professions who seek licensure in other states.

- States that enact universal license recognition laws must exercise prudence to not interfere with enacted compact provisions.
- Reciprocity is efficient in small-scale arrangements; however, reciprocity agreements for large-scale topics are not as efficient due to the number of required contracts.

Mr. Richard presented a memorandum entitled [Social Work Licensure Compact Study - Background Memorandum](#).

Ms. Jennifer Boeckel, Chairman, Board of Social Work Examiners, provided testimony ([Appendix L](#)) relating to the committee's study of the feasibility and desirability of the Legislative Assembly enacting the social work licensure compact. In response to questions from committee members, she noted:

- Joining the compact would not necessarily interfere with current reciprocity agreements.
- Due to the rise in popularity of the profession, the number of complaints have increased.
- There is a concern the national exam does not necessarily reflect the true competency of a prospective social worker.

No further business appearing, Chairman Roers Jones adjourned the meeting at 2:44 p.m.

Dustin A. Richard
Counsel

ATTACH:12