

SECTION 20. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STUDY - NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE SYSTEM INITIATIVE.

1. During the 2007-08 interim, the legislative council shall study the state's system for addressing workforce needs through a workforce system initiative. The workforce system initiative must include receipt of agency reports regarding implementation of workforce legislation enacted during the 2007 legislative session, active participation in focus groups across the state, and active participation in a workforce congress.
2. The focus groups shall discuss ways to enhance the state's system for addressing workforce needs, including consideration of workforce availability, skilled workforce needs, future workforce needs, and alignment of the state's higher education curriculum with the state's current and future workforce needs. The workforce congress shall receive a report on the activities of the focus groups, identify methods to enhance the state's workforce system in order to be well-positioned to participate in a knowledge-driven economy and to be globally competitive, and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the state's existing workforce system.
3. The department of commerce shall organize the focus groups and the workforce congress. Before the workforce congress, which must be held before June 1, 2008, the department shall convene a minimum of four focus groups. The department shall consult with the legislative council in compiling focus group and workforce congress participant invitation lists and drafting and distributing invitations, establishing focus group and workforce congress dates and locations, and preparing agendas for focus groups and the workforce congress. The focus groups and the workforce congress schedules and activities must take into consideration workforce study activities of the department.
4. The legislative council and the department of commerce shall enter a joint contract with a third party to provide the legislative council and the department with professional services to plan, facilitate, report on, and coordinate followup for the focus groups and workforce congress. The legislative council shall report its findings and recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to the sixty-first legislative assembly.