



# The Council

## Rural Health Transformation Program Funding

The Legislative Assembly appropriated \$397.9 million of federal funding for 2026 and 2027 for the Rural Health Transformation Program during its January special session. With this funding, North Dakota's Department of Health and Human Services has launched its first Rural Health Transformation Program funding opportunity, offering approximately \$10 million for grants to help retain health care professionals at the state's 37 critical access hospitals and affiliated clinics. Eligible strategies include retention bonuses, tuition reimbursement, child care partnership, workplace wellness, and mentorship programs. The grant application deadline is April 30 at 5:00 p.m. More information is available at <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/rural-health-transformation>.

## Government Finance Committee

The Government Finance Committee met on March 19 to receive information regarding the state budget, fees collected by selected state agencies, and applications received for the primary residence credit. As a part of the committee's study of a legislative office building, the Office of Management and Budget presented information regarding office space leased by state agencies in Bismarck and Mandan.

The Government Finance - Regional Jail Study Subcommittee toured the Burleigh Morton Detention Center and the Government Finance - Transportation Study Subcommittee received information on fixed route transit services in Grand Forks and Bismarck.

## Upcoming Meetings

### March

- 24** Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review  
Advanced Nuclear Energy
- 25** Legislative Task Force on Government Efficiency  
Higher Education Funding Review
- 26** Water Topics Overview  
Information Technology
- 31** Agriculture and Water Management  
Legacy and Budget Stabilization Fund  
Advisory Board

### April

- 1** Education  
Judiciary
- 8-9** Higher Education Institutions
- 13** Child Custody Review Task Force  
Tribal and State Relations
- 21-22** Advanced Nuclear Energy
- 22** Legislative Procedure and Arrangements

### May

- 27** Employee Benefits Programs
- 13** Tribal and State Relations



## Did you know?

The 2026 Spring Equinox, also known as the vernal equinox, occurred on Friday, March 20, observing the official start of spring in North Dakota.

# Tax Reform and Relief Advisory Committee

During a meeting on March 17, the Tax Reform and Relief Advisory Committee received information related to the committee's studies of economic development tax incentives, the stripper well oil extraction tax exemption, and property tax reform and relief. The Department of Commerce and city representatives provided information on two of the seven economic development tax incentives under review this interim: the renaissance zone credits and exemptions and tax increment financing districts. The Tax Department provided an overview of stripper well taxation structures in other states, and the Department of Mineral Resources shared stripper well statistics.

With respect to the committee's study of property tax reform and relief, the Tax Department provided an update on primary residence certification applications, primary residence credit reimbursement payments to taxing districts, and estimated tax-exempt property valuation information. Representatives from counties, cities, school districts, and townships provided feedback related to implementation of the taxing district levy limitation created in House Bill No. 1176 (2025). Senator Brad Bekkedahl, Chairman, requested permission to appoint a subcommittee to study property tax statements and report its findings to the full committee.



## Budget Section

The Budget Section met on March 18 to receive updates on the state budget, consider Emergency Commission requests, consider the use of funds from the Flexible Transportation Fund, and receive reports. Reports were received regarding the 2025-27 biennium new and vacant FTE funding pools, the status of information technology projects, the federal Rural Health Transformation Program, the status of the Job Insurance Trust Fund, and the Retirement and

Investment Office incentive compensation plan. The Budget Section approved the use of funds from the Flexible Transportation Fund for a city street project in Medora and a bridge replacement project in Cass County.

Budget Section divisions met the afternoon of March 18 to receive information regarding agency budgets and other fiscal matters. Divisions reviewed the budgets of the Department of Commerce, Industrial Commission, and the Department of Health and Human Services. The Leadership Division received updates on state employment trends, the state revenue forecast, the Cash Management Board, and the Legislative Task Force on Government Efficiency.



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