

Prospects & Possibilities

For North Dakota

BUSH FOUNDATION

courageous **LEADERSHIP** | sustainable **SOLUTIONS** | vital **COMMUNITIES**

Report Prepared by the Bush Foundation

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Prospects & Possibilities community conversations were made possible with the help of local partners:



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Overview

In 2010, the Bush Foundation sought to learn about the prospects and possibilities for North Dakota by engaging in community meetings and through a random, statewide survey of residents.

The Bush Foundation, in partnership with four convening organizations, hosted 36 community conversations in 28 communities across North Dakota between October 20 and December 16, 2010. Our goal was simple: ***to give community members the opportunity to talk about the prospects and possibilities for their community and state – both strengths and concerns – and to generate ideas for ways to address the concerns.***

We believe that the best solutions often come from within the community itself, especially if community members are given access to good information and opportunities to engage with each other in meaningful ways. Therefore, the meetings were designed to share information about the trends affecting the future of North Dakota and allow community members to connect through conversation. To view this information, read the complete notes from the sessions or to weigh in with your ideas and opinions, go to CitiZing.org/projects/northdakota.

To validate findings from the meetings, the Bush Foundation commissioned Wilder Research to conduct a random, statewide survey of North Dakota residents in December 2010. The survey sought to understand residents' opinions about how leadership is exercised in their communities, as well as what residents believe are the best options for solving the state's issues.

This report is designed to:

- Summarize high-level, statewide themes from the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions and survey of residents.
- Share top concerns and ideas generated during the sessions, including some anecdotal comments about ways the issues manifest themselves and ways they can be solved.
- Present key demographic and quantitative data from the sessions and survey.

Meeting participants agreed that more people need to get involved in discussions like these, and many expressed regret that they didn't have more time to discuss the issues. They also thought that the state's elected and appointed leaders would benefit from tapping into the collective energy and wisdom of people across the state. This report is not intended to be the end of the process; it's the start of what we hope will be an ongoing dialogue.

About the Bush Foundation

Since its beginning in 1953, the Bush Foundation has invested in the vitality of communities across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography. Today these communities face fundamental changes in their prospects and possibilities. These are not short-term conditions, but rather a new long-term reality that will affect the vitality of communities and the people in them for decades to come. Adapting to this new reality will pose tough problems that are complex, challenge the status quo, will not be solved with business-as-usual approaches, and will require change by whole communities.

We work in two different ways to support communities that are confronting these challenges. First, we commit ourselves to finding solutions to specific problems toward which we believe we can make a significant contribution. Today, we are involved in two such decade-long commitments: improving educational achievement and supporting the self-determination of Native nations.

Second, we help communities develop their capacity to solve their own tough public problems. We do this through a combination of leadership development and by providing research, data, tools, and opportunities to connect with others that are needed for developing innovative and sustainable solutions.

Through this work, the Bush Foundation is a catalyst for the courageous leadership necessary to create sustainable solutions to tough public problems and ensure community vitality.

North Dakota Prospects & Possibilities Sessions

The map and legend below show the locations of the 36 North Dakota sessions. See page 32 for a complete listing of the meeting dates, times and convening organizations.



Location #	City/Town	Location #	City/Town
1	Bismarck (4 sessions)	15	Larimore
2	Bowbells	16	Mandan
3	Carrington	17	Medora & Beach
4	Casselton	18	Minot
5	Cavalier	19	New Town
6	Devils Lake	20	Oakes
7	Dickinson (3 sessions)	21	Park River
8	Fargo (4 sessions)	22	Rolette
9	Fort Yates	23	Towner
10	Grand Forks	24	Underwood
11	Harvey	25	Valley City
12	Hazen	26	Wahpeton
13	Killdeer	27	Williston
14	Langdon	28	Wishek

Key Themes

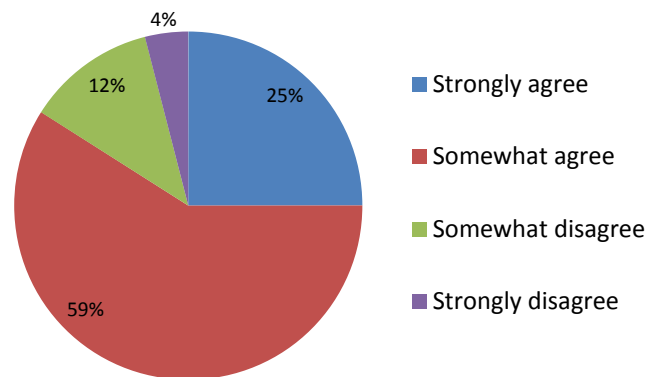
North Dakotans Want to Be Engaged and Be Part of the Solution

When the Bush Foundation embarked upon this project, it was with a fundamental belief that community members understand better than anyone the reality of the issues facing their communities and state, and that they are best positioned to make decisions about what path to follow.

While all participants agreed that tough choices need to be made, the community members were pleased to participate in the sessions, eager to share their opinions and brainstorm new ideas for how to approach the issues. The sessions seemingly enabled those gathered to speak freely their opinions about the future of North Dakota.

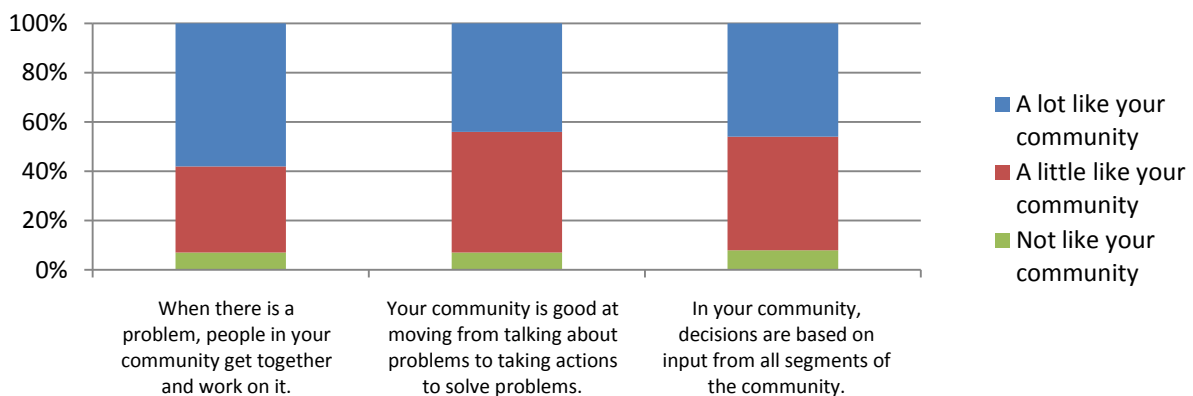
As shown in the chart at right, the meeting participants were confident that they had the ability to move some of the ideas forward. Eighty-four percent of participants agreed with that statement, with 25 percent strongly agreeing. The concerns that did exist focused on whether there was enough diversity of people and perspectives in the room and whether they had enough support to move forward in developing solutions. In the statewide survey, respondents expressed a similar viewpoint. Eighty-eight percent of those polled said they believed they can make a difference in improving the quality of life in their local community. This increased from 83 percent in 2009.

“Confidence I Can Help Move Some of These Ideas Forward”



A Majority of North Dakotans Believe Their Communities Are Effective at Solving Problems

The survey also explored how respondents felt about their community’s ability to solve its own problems. When asked if their community is effective at solving problems and improving their quality of life, more than half (53%) of North Dakotans said this is “a lot like their community.” This increased from 2009, when 41 percent of North Dakotans said this is “a lot like their community.”

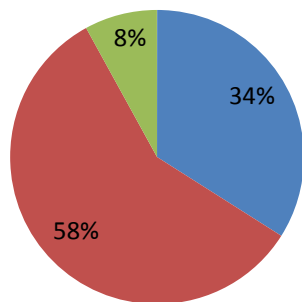


- Less-educated residents were more likely than residents with more education to endorse this statement as “a lot like their community” (62% of those with a high school diploma or less, 53% of those with some college, and 47% of those with a college degree or more education).
- Residents of rural areas were significantly more likely than residents of metro areas to believe this is “not like their community.”

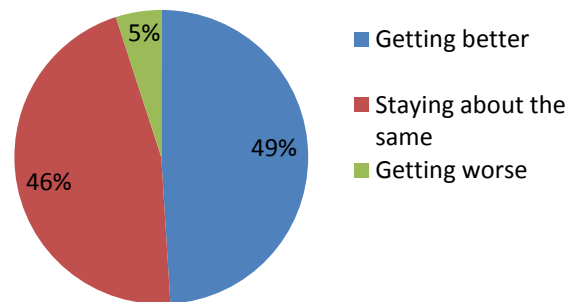
About Half of North Dakotans Believe Quality of Life for the State Is Improving

In the survey results, residents indicated a much more favorable outlook for both their community and their state, compared to a year ago. In general, North Dakotans are more likely to believe that the quality of life is getting better in their state than they are to believe quality of life is getting better in their community. Less-educated residents are less likely to think the quality of life in their community is getting better. Younger residents are more likely than older residents to believe that quality of life in their community and in the state as a whole are getting better.

In your community



In your state



While residents believe that the quality of life is improving, when asked to list their top three concerns related to quality of life in North Dakota, one third (36%) mentioned the economy/jobs, 26 percent mentioned housing and 25 percent mentioned transportation. Other top concerns of survey respondents were education (42%), health care (29%) and government budgets/spending/taxes (26%). This is significantly different than in 2009 when two-thirds (67%) of residents felt the economy/jobs was the most important issue, followed by health care (29%) and education (17%).

Participants Expressed the Need for Joint Planning and for Leaders to Work Together

While the *Prospects & Possibilities* participants and survey respondents expressed optimism in the state's outlook and their community's ability to solve problems, people identified a need for increased planning and vision for changes occurring throughout North Dakota. In particular, people wanted leaders to work together to address the challenges facing the state.

“North Dakota needs to have a frank, statewide discussion about what we need and how to build for the future.”¹

Bismarck Session Participant

“Please find a way to include the Native American population in these talks to include Native American youth in a brighter future.”

Devils Lake Session Participant

“Let's break down silos and have a real sharing of ideas.”

Fargo Session Participant

¹ Quotes from participants are included throughout this report to provide a sense of the individual contributions and conversations that occurred during the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions. The quotes are consistent with general themes, but are not intended to represent all participants, all sessions or even all of the discussions that took place on a particular topic. The quotes should be viewed as opinions of individual citizens. They do not represent the views of the Bush Foundation or the convening organizations. For a broader sampling of participant inputs, refer to the meeting notes from each session, which are available online at CitiZing.org/projects/northdakota.

North Dakotans Are Proud of Their State

Each of the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions started out by asking participants to share one thing that they love about North Dakota. Four themes consistently emerged across all 36 sessions.

- **Natural Beauty of the Land.** Responses in this category included things like: open spaces; wildflowers; the sky; exquisite beauty; winter, spring, summer and fall; the wind; the Badlands; fishing from a boat for walleye; hunting; clean air and water; access to the wilderness; serenity.
- **The People.** This category covered a range of characteristics found in the people of North Dakota, such as: people who are grounded and connected; hard working, friendly people; connection to family roots; the “wave” from folks you meet on the roads and highways; strong values; people’s sense of fairness and justice.

“When I was living in Philadelphia, we were driving down the road and saw another car with a North Dakota license plate, and we waved excitedly to them, thinking we must know them. They kind of just stared at us. Then they saw our license plate and began waving back!”

Larimore Session Participant

- **Our Community and Way of Life.** A number of people commented on the sense of community and way of life found in North Dakota including: the access we have to each other and to policymakers; a good, safe place to raise a family; small-town attitude; simplicity of our way of life; lack of traffic jams; cleanliness and safety; having a real chance to make a difference; camaraderie in rural areas; being and staying involved.
- **Strong Economy and Growth.** Responses here referenced the state’s solid financial position and significant opportunities, especially in the Northwest part of the state: budget surplus; growing number of jobs; possibilities for new businesses; low cost of living; low taxes; the chance for future opportunity.

Following this opening exercise, the participants turned their attention to discussing their top concerns. The pages that follow summarize themes and ideas that emerged from the ensuing discussions.

Concern #1: Changing Demographics across North Dakota

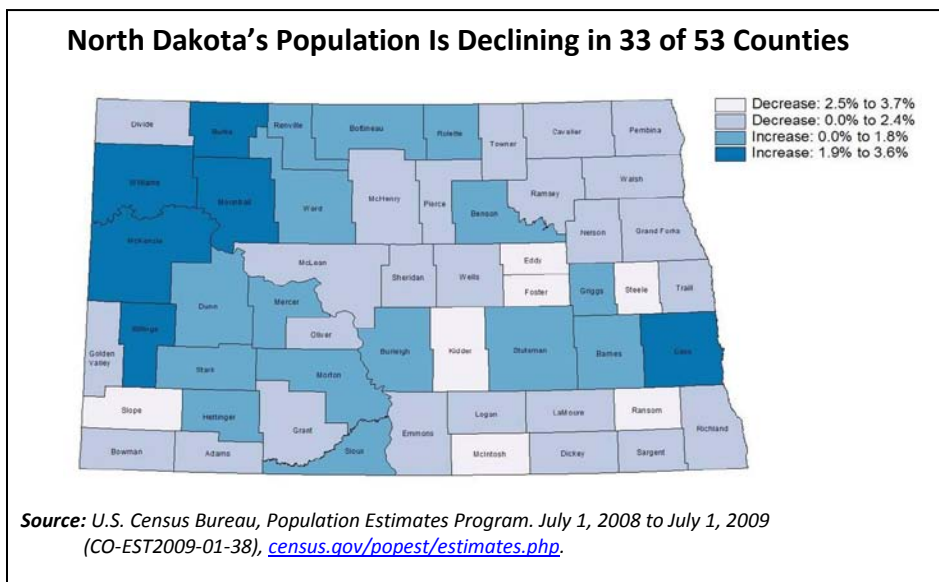
Overall, changing demographics across North Dakota was the top issue chosen by community members who participated in the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions. Forty-two percent of participants rated it as the state's biggest problem to solve. Demographic change was also selected as either the No. 1 or No. 2 issue in 31 of the 36 sessions, making it the top statewide concern identified by a large margin. In part, this is because they perceive demographic change to be intertwined with many other issues facing North Dakota communities. Key issues and themes related to shifting demographics are highlighted below.

Key Issues Discussed

1. Many North Dakotans are moving away from rural areas, and in some cases are leaving the state entirely, due to unaffordable housing or lack of educational and viable employment opportunities. Young people also mention lack of amenities, entertainment and things to do in rural areas as reasons for leaving.
2. The remaining population is steadily aging, resulting in a smaller workforce, fewer contributions to the tax base and more elderly in need of public services.
3. Urban areas and counties in the Northwest portion of the state are experiencing a different set of issues due to new industries, the oil boom and an influx of immigrant workers.
4. The future depends upon attracting more people, especially young people, to the state and getting them to stay.

People Are Moving Away from Rural Areas

As the chart below shows, North Dakota's population is declining in 33 of 53 counties. It is important to note, however, that the population of North Dakota is *not* declining overall. It is consolidating and aging. In the last decade, population growth centered in the larger cities and in



counties with American Indian reservations. By 2020, nearly half of the counties in North Dakota will have less than 4,000 residents.

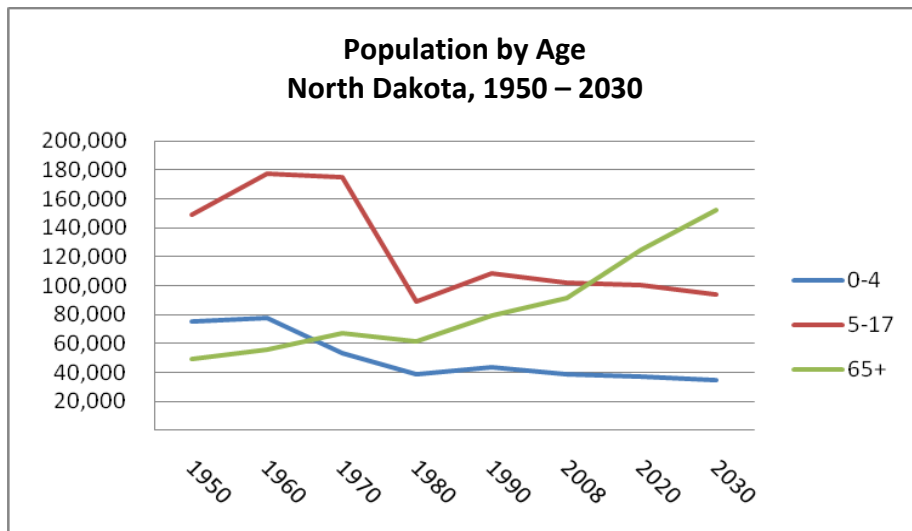
Participants, especially those in rural areas, are experiencing and are worried about the outflow of people from their communities. In their discussions, participants highlighted a lack of job

opportunities (even for those with college degrees). Many jobs that do exist lack benefits and do not provide a livable wage. In addition, the scarcity of job opportunities for spouses and lack of childcare compound the issue, eventually leading people to move away or take jobs that are further away. As this happens, community members tend to move to larger communities for services like health care, groceries, schools and shopping. As one participant in Mandan noted, "We're seeing that rural businesses aren't supported locally. Areas are losing their grocery stores

because they're not being supported locally. Most of the people work in larger urban areas and go to these urban areas to shop." As a result, more local businesses close and more people consider moving away, further perpetuating the cycle. With fewer people to support needed services, rural communities are beginning to experience great financial burden, without as much help from the state government as in the past. Many of these communities are finding it difficult to maintain their schools and health care systems (see pages 13 – 17 for more on these issues).

An Aging Population and Ensuing Concerns

Data gathered by the Wilder Foundation predicts that by 2012, the number of people age 65 and older will surpass the school-age population in North Dakota (see chart below). This information



Source: Wilder Research from U.S. Census Bureau and State Demographic Center Projections

surprised many of the participants, especially those from the more urban areas. Aging of the North Dakota population, due to the aging of baby boomers, is intensified by the high rates of young adults leaving the state. More than half of young adults (18-24) in North Dakota moved in the last year, a good share of them moving out of state. (See page 11 for more on why young people are leaving.)

Participants in all areas expressed concerns about the diminishing tax base and growing needs for the elderly, specifically health care, senior housing and transportation.

**“Aging is imminent. We can’t change that.
We need to focus on how to provide services to them.”**

Fargo Session Participant

An additional concern expressed by those in rural areas related to farming. They questioned who would take over the farming operations as current farmers retire.

Shifts Affecting Cities, Urban Centers and the Northwest Counties

While these changes are taking place, urbanization and the concentration of the population in urban areas are also occurring. A number of discussions noted the positive changes caused with the influx of newcomers to urban areas because of new industries, including more racial and ethnic diversity, and young people.

“I’ve lived in dying rural communities all my life. In 1930, North Dakota reached its peak population of 680,000 people. The demise of small communities has resulted in the increase of certain population hubs – like Fargo and Bismarck – there’s a rural-to-urban shift happening. We need our cities to be as vibrant and healthy as possible.”

Bismarck Session Participant

However, in urban areas, as well as in the Western oil fields, participants expressed concern that the incoming population has put a strain on public services, housing, transportation and infrastructure. Some citizens were concerned that many itinerant workers, especially those in the Northwest region of the state, are unable to bring or to relocate families because of a lack of housing. Participants in the Northwest also expressed the need to invest in roads, public transportation, utilities and law enforcement. See page 18 for more on issues facing the Northwest counties due to the oil boom.

“There is an influx of people. The ability to support this influx and adapt to the change is a big deal.”

Dickinson Session Participant

Participants acknowledged that important cultural changes are occurring related to racial and cultural differences, worldview and shifts affecting the historically important role of farming. Many discussions center on the need for North Dakotans to learn to adjust to change. Participants in some sessions also expressed concerns about the changes to social fabric of the community, including changes in work ethic, leadership and volunteerism.

Importance of Attracting and Retaining Young People

While all of the issues related to demographic changes were viewed as important and worthy of discussion, on the whole, participants were most concerned about and willing to work on the issue of how to keep their young people, attract more young people to the state and get them to stay.

Overall, participants believed that young people are leaving North Dakota for a variety of reasons, including lack of good jobs and housing, not enough community amenities (coffee houses, health clubs, etc.) and few entertainment options.

Questions were posed by participants in a number of the sessions:

- How do we attract youth and then retain them?
- How do we promote North Dakota as a place of involvement and opportunity?
- How do we create high-paying jobs so our college graduates will want to return to North Dakota to work and raise their families?
- How do we ensure housing is adequate?

One participant noted, “North Dakota has – or soon will have – one of the largest percentages of folks over age 65 in the nation. We need to attract more young people, if we are not ‘growing’ them. To do that effectively, we must plan for and have the resources and infrastructure that people need and want – things like housing, jobs, education, culture and health care. These are the things that will attract people and encourage them to move here.”

Proposed Solutions for Addressing Demographic Changes²

Ideas generated by the participants to address this issue fell into several categories. Highlighted below are some of the ideas generated during the sessions.

Market the State Differently

- Survey young people about what they want to see in North Dakota as a place to live; also collect data from those who left to find out why and what could get them to come back and stay.
- Market the state as an attractive place to live and work, both for younger population and the elderly. Promote the advantages of a North Dakota lifestyle, focusing on “quality of place.”
- Market small towns to retirees.

Provide Incentives and Tax Breaks

- Create incentives for young college-educated people to stay by considering ways to increase salaries or creating loan forgiveness or tuition reimbursement programs for professionals who choose to stay in the state. Build collaborations between universities and industry to support and fund this program.
- Offer tax breaks for first-time homeowners to retain people.
- Offer tax incentives for entrepreneurs and business owners.

Create Programs to Generate New Jobs and Services

- Partner with the university system to promote job development.
- Within communities, promote volunteer programs among retired population.

Focus on Long-Term Planning and Investments

- Increase planning and vision for population changes in terms of infrastructure, housing and services.
- Focus on regional planning/government, instead of 53 county governments.

² The solutions presented in this report are representative of those proposed and discussed by participants at the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions. They are not recommendations proposed or endorsed by the Bush Foundation, Wilder Research or the convening organizations.

Concern #2: K-12 Education and Access to Higher Education

Prospects & Possibilities participants' concerns about education focused on public K-12 education, as well as on access to higher education. In the statewide survey, education was the top concern identified by respondents. Forty-two percent of respondents mentioned education when asked to list their top three concerns related to quality of life in North Dakota. As shown on page 20, respondents were also most likely to favor increased state spending on K-12 education, compared to other issues. People with children were more likely to favor increased spending on K-12 education. Younger residents were more likely than older residents to favor increased spending on K-12 education and higher education, as were metro residents compared to rural residents.

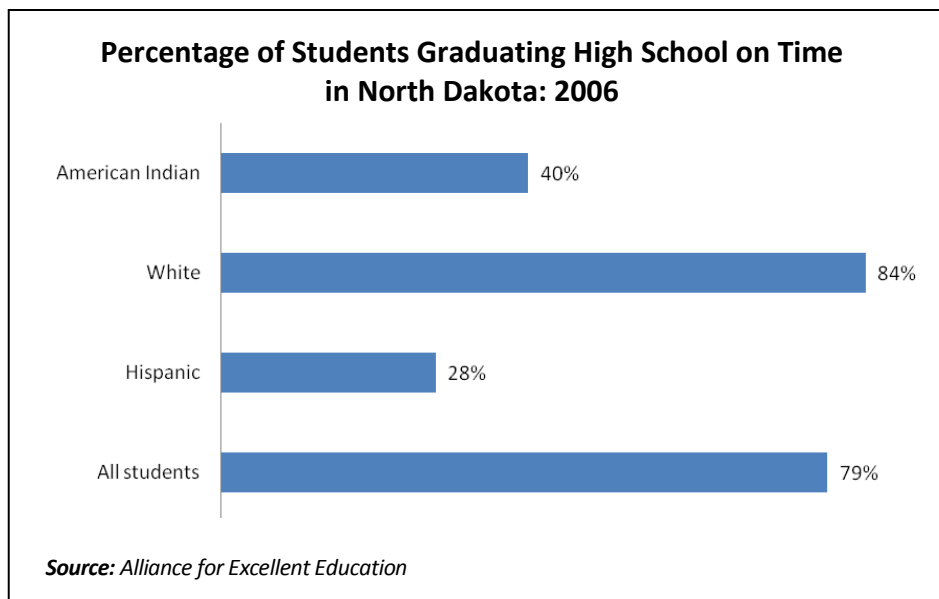
Three key issues were discussed in the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions where education was chosen as one of the state's top concerns.

Key Issues Discussed

1. Graduation rates are low across the state, particularly among Native Americans.
2. Access to and quality of education are both lower in rural areas, compounding the long-term challenges for rural communities.
3. Costs of higher education are too high, creating a significant need for financial assistance for students. Additionally, some questioned the relevance of higher education to the job market in North Dakota, as many with college degrees cannot find jobs.

Concerns about Low Graduation Rates and Access to Quality Education

Participants were concerned about the low graduation rates across the state. A number of participants commented that the changing demographics and rural nature of the state make it more



difficult to recruit and retain quality teachers. "We don't have as many 'home grown' teachers, and the ones that we do have are not staying, especially in the rural districts," said one person from Hazen. Participants felt that low teacher quality is created by a lack of incentives to attract quality teachers (in terms of housing, infrastructure, job for spouse, services), as well as low teacher pay.

According to a 2009 report by the National Education Association, the average teacher salary in North Dakota is the second lowest of all 50 U.S. states at \$41,654 per year.

Additionally, they felt that the out-migration of people creates less access to quality education in rural areas as schools close or consolidate, which forces students to travel long distances or, in some cases, even move to other areas. They also believed that rural schools suffer due to lack of funding, limiting resources like special education programming in those areas.

More generally, across the state, participants acknowledged higher dropout rates for Native American students, as well as other students of color. Participants thought that schools are ill-equipped to serve diverse students and address the needs of English Language Learners (and that such programs are under-funded). They also identified the need to retain quality teachers on reservations.

Participants expressed concerns that “No Child Left Behind” has diminished the quality of the curriculum, encouraging schools to teach to the test and to focus too much on math and science, versus the arts. Beyond that, participants felt current curriculum lacks components of practical value in North Dakota, such as real-world skills, civics and what students will need to adapt to a rapidly changing world. There were also concerns about lack of parent involvement and responsibility, and a need to build community in schools.

Interestingly, in several groups where youth were present, the young people disagreed that education was a large problem. They also disagreed with the sentiment that their teachers weren’t qualified. They felt that they had qualified teachers but wanted to see more variety in how their education was delivered: new methods of teaching, hands-on lessons and more technology are needed to keep students engaged and interested. They also believed that students need to be held accountable and take more responsibility for themselves.

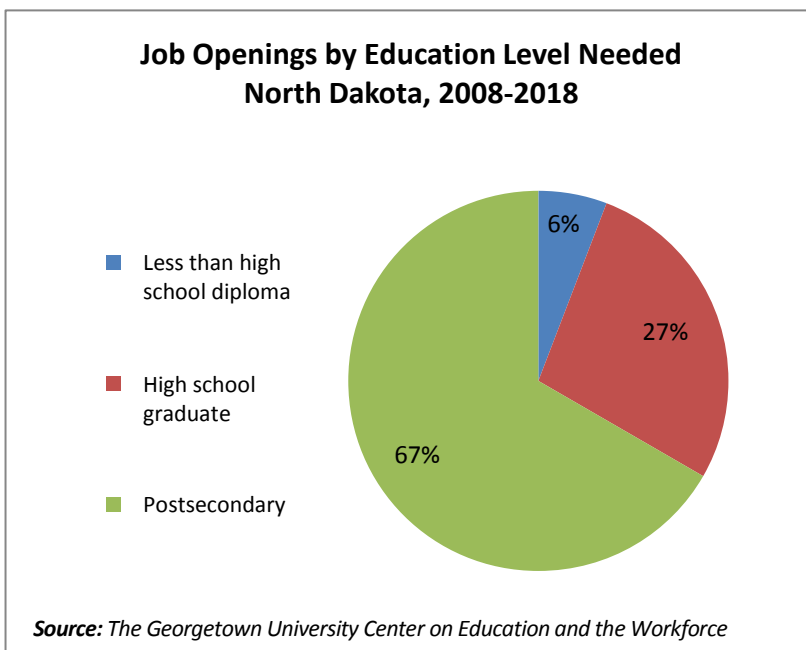
“In order to help teachers and the education system, support should be given to parents and students to help them realize the importance of education at a young age.”

Oakes Session Student Participant

Access to and Need for Higher Education

According to Wilder Research, over the next decade, most of the 120,000 new jobs and job openings due to retirement will require postsecondary education and training. Nationally, North Dakota ranks second in the percentage of jobs requiring a postsecondary education. Even jobs traditionally

considered as available to laborers, such as farming and ranching, increasingly require a degree.



“There are many people looking for work, but they must be skilled, educated or experienced, even to do farm work. You cannot put just anyone on a \$300,000 combine!”

Bismarck Session Participant

Jobs requiring less education and low skills in manufacturing are being automated or shipped offshore to take advantage of cheaper labor.

However, not all participants agreed that good paying jobs were available to individuals with a college degree.

“There is a lack of good paying jobs available to students when they do graduate – whether from high school, college or even trade school,” said one participant in the Hazen session. “Combine this with the debt load of college and increasing costs of housing and health care, and students at any level simply can’t make it.”

“As a mom of two college aged kids, I have to point out that the cost of a college education is outrageous. Students are taking five and six years to complete a four-year program because of the way the curriculum is set up. An expanded number of required core classes makes it more difficult to complete the programs of study, especially when students are uncertain of what they want to be when they begin their college experience.”

Hazen Session Participant

As higher education costs have risen and total appropriations per student have declined and become a smaller part of state spending over the past decade, higher education institutions have relied increasingly on tuition to cover expenses, making college relatively less affordable.

Proposed Solutions for Education Issues

Highlighted below are ideas proposed by session participants to address education-related issues.

Review/Increase Education Funding at the State Level

- Change funding priorities at the government level. Invest in youth through education.

Make Teacher Salaries/Benefits More Competitive

- Offer competitive salaries and benefits for teachers, as well as providing other incentives in the community.

Consider Innovative Solutions for Education Delivery

- Use technology to increase access to education in general, as well as specific programs (for example, AP classes).
- Build a large school between two communities to increase access for both.
- Create new, affordable afterschool programs that are open to all students, not just “at risk” students.

Invest in New Ways to Make Education Relevant and Provide Incentives for Students Who Stay in North Dakota

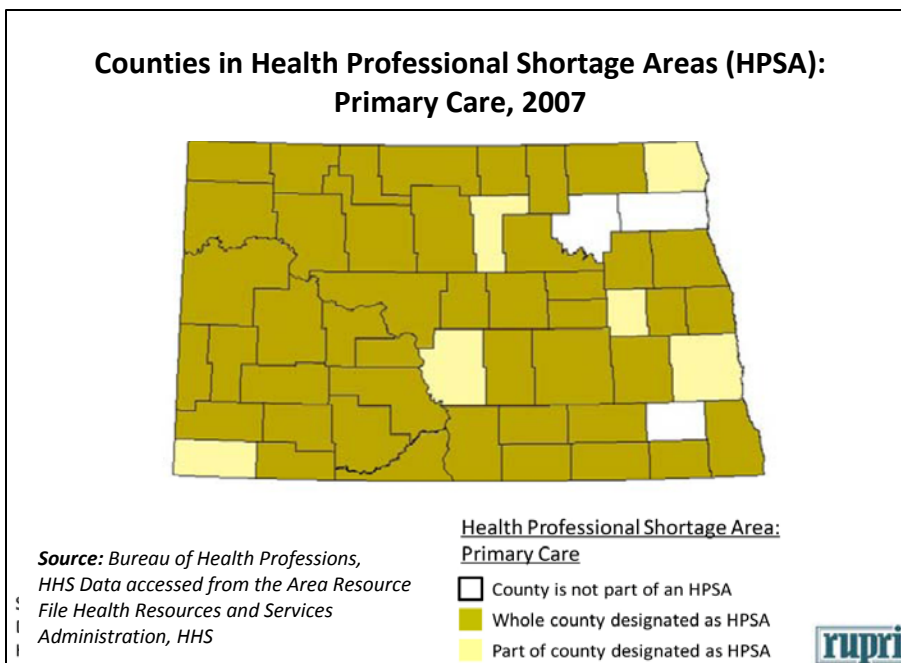
- Build internships into high school education to provide “real-world” experience.
- Teach new technology and other skills relevant to the changing world.
- Emphasize professional careers such as teaching and medicine.
- Provide incentives for students to stay in North Dakota, such as tuition or loan reimbursement.

Concern #3: Access to and Cost of Quality Health Care

Participants also felt that health care is extremely important and connected to many other issues. They particularly identified a lack of access to health care in rural areas. In the statewide survey, 29 percent of respondents identified health care as one of the top three issues impacting quality of life in North Dakota.

As shown in the chart below, just three counties in North Dakota have enough primary health care providers. The participants also discussed limited emergency care (including a lack of ambulances), lack of providers (including general practitioners) and the difficulty in retaining staff and maintaining facilities. They felt that in rural areas, facilities are more limited, and therefore don't offer a range of commonplace procedures (such as C-section) or more specialized care. This lack of local services forces people to travel when they need to receive specialized treatments. Participants also acknowledged that access to health care is a more serious problem on Indian reservations in the state.

Participants also discussed the costs of health care, agreeing that it is not affordable, especially for the elderly and unemployed. This results in uninsured people going without preventative services. They noted that even for people with insurance, coverage is often inadequate with out-of-pocket costs that are too high. People generally felt that more competition is needed among the insurance companies with a presence in the North Dakota.



“My older brother and his wife live in assisted living in a rural area. A big issue for them [related to health care] is transportation. They need to come to Bismarck for health care, and since they are unable to drive anymore, they must get a ride from a family member. What if they didn't have someone to give them a ride? How would they get to the doctor?”

Bismarck Session Participant

Participants were also concerned about the high rates of obesity and diabetes in the state. According to Wilder Research, about 28 percent of North Dakota adults were obese in 2009, more than double the rate in 1995. In addition, chronic diseases are increasing, such as diabetes, which has increased from less than 4 percent of the population in 1995 to nearly 8 percent in 2008.

In terms of prevention, participants cited an overall lack of education about preventable health problems, such as diabetes and obesity. They also mentioned limited services addressing alcoholism, addiction and mental health.

Proposed Solutions for Health Care Issues

Meeting participants suggested a wide range of solutions to address health care-related issues.

Devise New Options for Health Care Coverage

- Offer wellness credits for those who maintain positive health habits.
- Create statewide universal health care. In this system, if you are a veteran or Indian Health Service recipient, you could receive services in any facility, therefore reducing the price of transportation that exists because people must be transported to the facility approved by their particular provider. A community health center concept could be incorporated into the system, offering preventive services. The system designed by the people of North Dakota would be funded by the state with matching dollars by the federal government to provide health care to all North Dakota citizens.
- Encourage and incentivize the formation of health care cooperatives.
- Regulate insurance companies.

Explore Innovative Ways to Attract and Retain Doctors

- Create incentives for doctors to stay in North Dakota, including housing benefits and job opportunities for spouses.
- Allow tuition forgiveness for health professionals who stay in state/rural areas.
- Improve quality of health care facilities as workplaces.
- Encourage youth to consider health professions.

Consider New Options for Health Care Delivery

- Share specialized services between communities.
- Create a clinic for each county.
- Create a regional medical center of excellence (i.e., "Mayo Clinic on the Prairie").
- Create a rotating physician program to visit areas that don't have any health care professionals.
- Use technology to increase access to services and patient information.
- Plan ahead for health care facilities and services to address changing demographic (i.e., elderly)
- Encourage "shopping" locally for health care.
- Promote disease prevention through education, including a focus on exercise and healthy school lunches.

Other Themes That Emerged

The process used in the sessions allowed participants to identify many different areas of concern. Highlighted below are themes that either emerged as important in certain regions of the state or came up as critical underlying elements to other concerns.

Issues Related to the Oil Boom in the Northwest

The topic of the oil boom in the Northwest area of the state was a topic that was on citizens' minds across the state, not just in the sessions held in that region. Participants recognized that the oil industry has created a number of opportunities in North Dakota. They also thought that it offers the opportunity for the state to make long-term investments across North Dakota in housing, infrastructure and transportation. Yet people had many questions. They wondered how much revenue from oil leaves the state and if it's a viable industry for the long term.

Session participants were also concerned that housing is not affordable near the oil region. Participants suggested the need for affordable, temporary housing. They mentioned that a lack of infrastructure (including sewers and water) makes housing difficult to provide. Participants stated the need for a support system for housing developers, including tax credits and housing trust funds.

“Lack of housing is a huge problem. Rent is going up and people cannot afford it.”

Dickinson Session Participant

“The state cannot continue to take money out of the oil counties without investing some in the roads, sewage system, streets and schools.”

Bismarck Session Participant

“Small communities don't have the time and money to do the planning. Who can get things going and what resources are available?”

Bowbells Session Participant

Some people also expressed concern that the oil industry is negatively affecting the environment, including contaminating water for today and the future. They're worried that if industries are not responsible for pollution they will not clean it up. People shared stories of contaminated water from oil drilling being pumped into a sandpit in the earth as an example of improper clean-up. While people acknowledged a concern that regulation might negatively affect jobs in the coal industry, they simultaneously expressed concerns about air and water quality. They questioned if things were moving too fast without considering the environmental consequences.

Flooding

While few participants viewed flooding as a statewide concern, a number of participants in the Eastern region of the state discussed flooding as a major issue requiring attention. The people who discussed this issue focused on flood management, noting a lack of legislative responsiveness. They worry about the impacts on roads and bridges, and potential debt for townships. People also voiced concerns about decreasing potable water supplies and riverbank erosion, wondering if development is happening too close to rivers. Some felt that flooding is connected with environmental concerns.

Solutions generated by the sessions that discussed this issue included developing permanent flood protection and funding, like Wahpeton and Grand Forks have done; using comprehensive state water basin management at a state or Sheyenne Basin region level to be done by a third party; and looking at how other states (like Minnesota) deal with flooding and model policy after them.

Race Relations

Throughout these sessions, there were many discussions about Native Americans and people of color in North Dakota. Participants identified many problems facing Native Americans, particularly those living on reservations.

- They cited lower graduation rates than the population at large, and the difficulty to retain quality teachers on reservations.
- They mentioned lower-quality health care and a social service gap on reservations.
- In addition, some participants noted that segregation is a significant problem.

Overall, many participants expressed concern that Native Americans don't have the same opportunities.

At the same time, participants' discussion of demographic change often centered on racial and ethnic changes in the population. These changes were most prevalent in urban areas and areas with migratory workers. Among the influx of racially and ethnically diverse people, many participants cited an increased number of immigrants and refugees. They acknowledged the immigrant experience is often difficult and identified a lack of culturally appropriate services, including ELL (English Language Learners) classes. In these conversations, some people expressed feelings of apprehension at the change and articulated a need to adjust to the influx of people and cultures. On the other hand, many people saw the influx as positive, citing the richness of culture and language. Finally, participants felt that Native Americans and other people of color need to be involved in the conversation about which problems are most important to them and how to address them.

State Government, Budget and Taxes

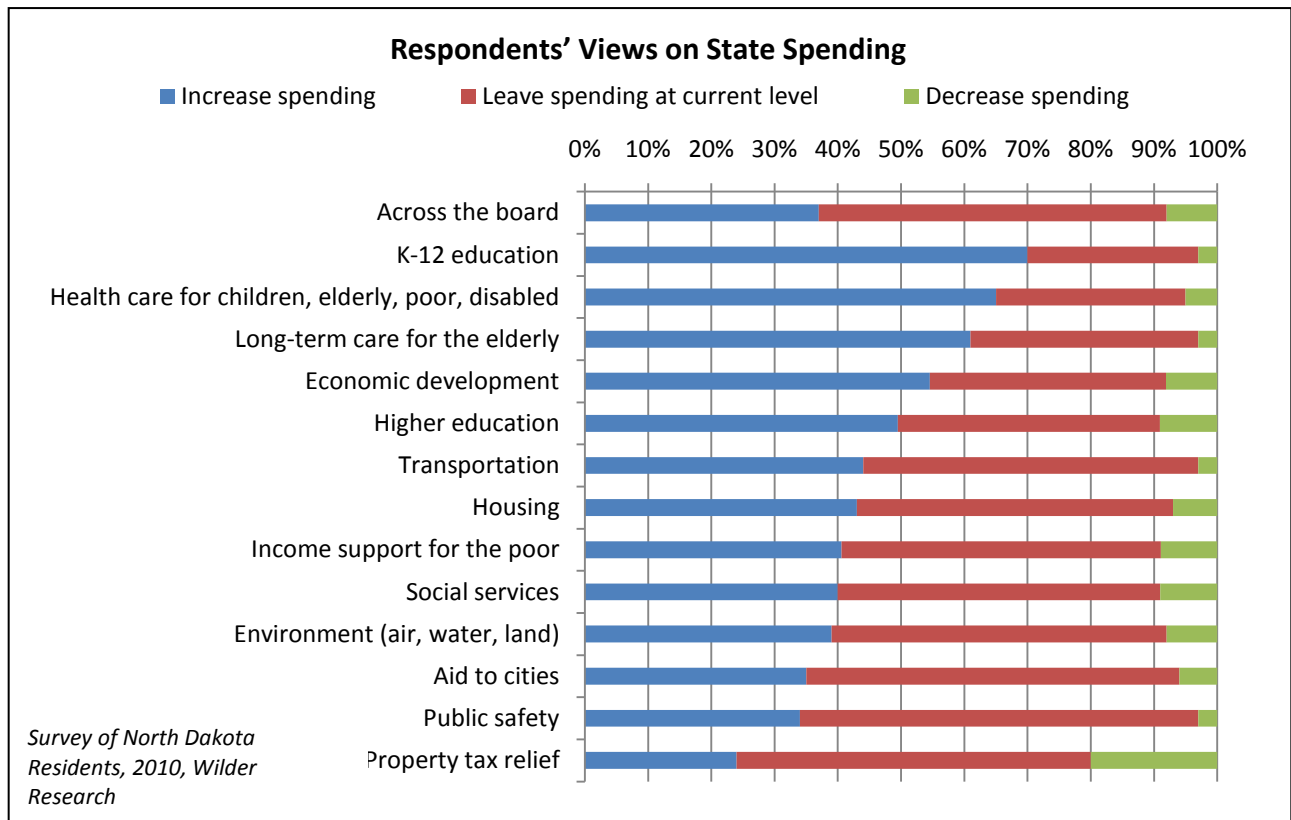
In the sessions, state government was a common topic of conversation. People discussed issues from taxation to the state budget to the representation of local issues at the state level.

“Government policy affects everything from farm programs to social services, including allowances for farmers, milk prices and many more.”

Carrington Session Participant

Many in the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions felt that possible solutions hinged on reconsidering the tax structure in the state. However, among participants and sessions, there was disagreement about the best approach. One recurring theme was the distribution of tax revenue throughout the state. People were concerned about what revenue was staying in the state and in their communities. Many wondered if there are different ways to tax the oil industry and workers to more effectively support the services and infrastructure needs disproportionately affecting the Western region. Beyond that, many participants felt the state government was not always aware of needs at the local level. A few participants expressed concerns that the government wasn't paying attention to their needs and stated the need to educate elected officials about local problems. Many people also said they did not fully understand the state budget process or financial situation, and discussed a need to further educate the public.

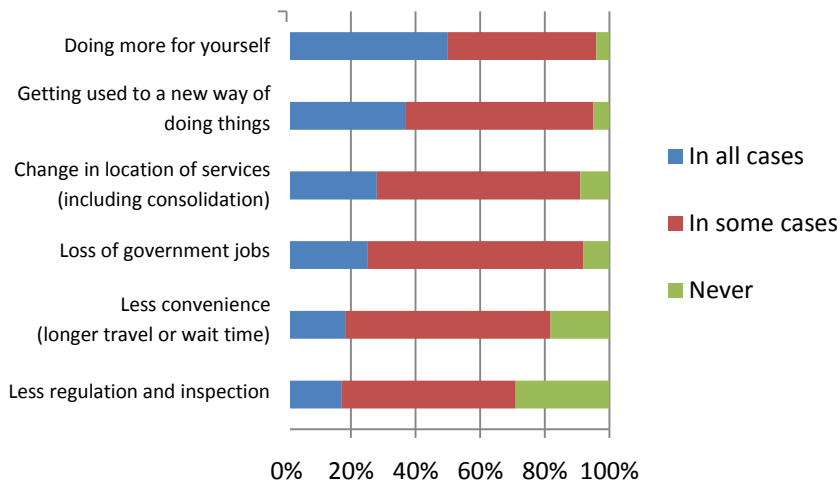
Survey respondents were asked if spending should be increased, left at the current level or decreased in several specific areas of government. Those surveyed were most likely to favor increases in spending in the areas of K-12 education; health care for children, the elderly, poor and disabled; long-term care for the elderly; and economic development. They were least likely to favor increases in spending for aid to cities, public safety and property tax relief.



While more than half of residents (55%) wanted to leave “across the board” spending at the current level, differences emerged based on the responder’s demographic characteristics.

- Women were more likely than men to favor increased spending.
- People with children were more likely to favor increased spending on K-12 education, public safety and the environment, whereas people without children were more likely to favor increased spending on income support for the poor.
- Less-educated residents were more likely than residents with more education to favor increased spending income support for the poor, public safety and housing.
- Younger residents are more likely than older residents to favor increased spending on K-12 education and higher education.
- Residents from metro areas were more likely than residents of non-metro areas to favor increased spending on K-12 education, higher education and economic development, whereas residents of non-metro areas were more likely to favor increased spending on public safety, housing, aid to cities and the environment.

What Respondents Would Be Willing To Sacrifice for Spending Cuts



Survey of North Dakota Residents, 2010, Wilder Research

The survey also explored what citizens would be willing to sacrifice for spending cuts. North Dakotans were most likely to be willing to accept doing more for themselves and getting used to a new way of doing things. They were least willing to accept less regulation and inspection and less convenience, such as longer waits or travel times.

The Need for Joint Planning

Across all themes – reflected in the proposed solutions coming out of the session – people identified a need for increased planning and vision for changes occurring throughout North Dakota.

“We need regional planning. City and county planning isn’t cutting it.”

Mandan Session Participant

Citizens appreciated it when state and local elected officials were present. In many sessions, one or two elected officials were present. In a few sessions, multiple lawmakers came. In fact, so many city council members came to one session in Dickinson that one member had to go home to avoid a quorum.

During the survey, when asked what one piece of advice they would give to elected officials in their state as they work on issues of importance to their state, by far the most common suggestions provided by the residents of North Dakota fell under these themes:

- Listen to your constituents, represent the people who elected you, remember who you work for (25% of respondents).
- Use common sense, do what is best for the people, make tough decisions, don’t pander to lobbyists (12% of respondents).
- Exercise fiscal responsibility, balance the budget, don’t waste money (11% of respondents).

Participants also said that they would be willing to spend time to understand issues, prioritize and take action.

“I’d like to have follow-up meetings such as this—each year or so.”

Williston Session Participant

Importance of Courageous Leadership

In addition to its focus on building capacity within communities to solve tough problems, the Bush Foundation also focuses on building courageous leadership capacity.

Courageous leaders don't shy away from conflict when they are trying to solve tough problems. Courageous leaders harness energy from differing points of view and rally community members to work together to find solutions. Courageous leadership can come from anybody in your community, not just those in charge.

Bush Foundation Definition of Courageous Leadership

Survey respondents were read the description above when asked about the courageous leadership in their community. When asked if their community has the courageous leadership it needs to solve tough problems, half (50%) of residents said this is “a lot like their community” and 40 percent said it is “a little like their community.” Women, people without children, and people with some college or more education were most likely to strongly endorse this statement about their community.

Two-thirds (68%) of residents said their community is either “strong” or “very strong” in terms of courageous leadership, compared with just 55 percent in 2009. Women, people without children, and residents of metro areas were more likely to feel their community is “strong” or “very strong” in terms of courageous leadership.

Upswing in Leadership and Moving from Talk to Action

Based on the survey of residents, there was an upswing in North Dakotans’ perception of leadership and the ability of leadership to move from talk to action. These findings are highlighted in the chart below.

My community...	Percentage reporting “a lot” like their community	
	2009	2010
Is strong regarding courageous leaders	55%	68%
Moves from talk to action	34%	44%
Gets together to work on problems	67%	58%
Decides based on input from all segments	35%	46%

Survey of North Dakota Residents, 2009 – 2010, Wilder Research

There was also a correlation between those who reported problems being solved “a lot” in their communities and their perception of the strength of courageous leadership in their community.

My community...	Those who report problems being solved “a lot” also report community ...		Those who report problems being solved “not at all” also report community ...	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
Is strong regarding courageous leaders	78%	85%	9%	12.5%
Moves from talk to action	65%	65%	0%	7%
Gets together to work on problems	84%	74%	11%	12%
Decides based on input from all segments	61%	62%	2%	8%

Survey of North Dakota Residents, 2009 – 2010, Wilder Research

Observations from the Conversations

Conveners and session organizers had the following observations from the *Prospects & Possibilities* conversations.

1. **Session participants universally expressed appreciation at being asked for their opinions and ideas.** They appreciated the opportunity to be heard, as well as being involved in the identification of possible solutions. The Bush Foundation and partner organizations want to help this fact be well known to policymakers who are considering how to engage courageous leadership to solve tough problems.

“Thank you for helping our voices be heard.”

Medora Session Participant

In many sessions, participants said they wished they had more time to discuss the issues and brainstorm ideas. There was an overwhelming sentiment that even after three hours of discussion, they had just scratched the surface.

2. **Rural residents are acutely aware of the demographic and economic shifts already underway in their communities** – specifically the effects of the aging population and the exodus of young people. They may be more inspired to act now than those in urban areas where population density may hide the underlying demographic changes.
3. **Many participants expressed that planning was needed in their states to address problems and opportunities, manage change and move toward solutions.** This is an indication of the ripeness for action.

There was a sense, however, that the action items still seem very nebulous. Participants were concerned that nothing would come of their input. For these sessions to have lasting impact, it will be important to define next steps in partnership with local and state organizations and with government leaders.

Next Steps

The next steps in the *Prospects & Possibilities* initiative depend upon your ideas for follow-up after you've read the report. We have ideas but we also welcome your input, either for things we should do or about things you plan to do. Read on for more details, or begin sending us your feedback now at [Facebook.com/ProspectsND](https://www.facebook.com/ProspectsND).

When we started this project last fall with partner organizations and participants from across the state, it was with a fundamental belief that historic demographic and economic shifts across our country and the region are creating tremendous challenges and opportunities. We also believe that community members understand better than anyone the reality of these trends facing their communities and the state. They are best positioned to make decisions about what path to follow.

Almost universally, participants at the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions were pleased to participate. They were glad that someone was asking them to share their opinions and that they had a chance to brainstorm new ideas for how to approach the issues. They were confident they had the ability to move some of the ideas forward.

To honor this confidence and self-determination, we suggest that **the report findings can be a catalyst for the forward motion** and that by sharing your reactions, **you will help shape the next steps**.

While many of the meeting participants expressed an interest in continuing the discussion and taking action in their communities, they agreed that more people need to get involved. They also thought that the state's elected and appointed leaders would benefit from tapping into the ideas of people across the state. The Bush Foundation has already shared the findings with many state and local leaders, and we are distributing this report to all legislators and key appointed officials. We encourage you to share the report as well. Yet while we hope this will make a difference, the *Prospects & Possibilities* report is not intended simply to be the end of the process. It's also the start of what we hope will be an ongoing dialogue about and game plan for local, regional and state actions to strengthen the community capacity and courageous leadership needed for these transformative times.

We have some next step ideas in mind: face-to-face follow-up gatherings, increasing awareness of and connections to existing resources and expertise, and design labs and community pilots to dig into more depth on issues and solutions raised, as examples. Before we take any next steps ourselves, we want to hear your feedback and suggestions; but that shouldn't stop you from moving forward with your own next steps, and we encourage you to do so.

Some Guiding Questions for Dialogue

- What are your reactions to the report? What did it miss? What did it hit? (This report is a statewide report. If you want to see the individual community conversation reports go to [CitiZing.org/projects/northdakota](https://www.citizing.org/projects/northdakota).)
- As you read the report, does anything pop to mind about how you might use this information in your own community or organization? What ideas does it inspire, if any? Are there misconceptions or falsehoods that should be corrected (the report was based both on the recorded comments of community members who participated in the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions and on data collected from state and federal sources).

- Do you know if people or organizations are already working on the challenges, opportunities, and concerns noted in the report? Who are they? How can people connect with them?
- What needs to happen or is happening already in your community to address concerns raised or to take advantage of opportunities noted?

Share Your Feedback with the Foundation about *Prospects & Possibilities*

- **Take the feedback survey** at svy.mk/prospectsandpossibilities.
- **Send an email** to info@bushfoundation.org or write: Prospects & Possibilities, Bush Foundation, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E900, St. Paul, MN 55101

Keep the *Prospects & Possibilities* Conversation Going

- **Continue the discussion on Facebook** by encouraging people to read the report and join in the discussion at Facebook.com/ProspectsND.
- **Start a conversation** about the report findings using the guiding questions starting on page 25. Talk with your family members, friends, neighbors and colleagues. Share it with your church group, service clubs, youth groups, chamber of commerce and others.
- **Share resources and names of organizations** that are already working on the concerns and ideas raised in the report. Help make those resources be more widely known locally and send a short description and contact information to us at info@bushfoundation.org so we can help highlight their existence and connect people with them statewide.
- **Share your stories.** Write a brief description about how you, your community or organizations are tackling problems and taking advantage of opportunities, and share that with us at info@bushfoundation.org so we can help you share it across the state and region. These stories can help educate and inspire others to take action as well.
- **Promote the findings** in your local newspaper, or post a link to the report from your Facebook page, website, blog and other social and traditional media and encourage discussion back and forth.
- **Host a community meeting** and invite one of the convening organizations to facilitate a process like the original *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions so more people can participate in the process.

Share the report with your representatives in the legislature and discuss your thoughts with them. You can find their contact information in the Current Legislators section of the North Dakota Legislature website: legis.nd.gov/information/general/contact.html.

We'll be compiling the responses over the next few weeks and formulating more follow-up actions based on your input. As we do, we'll consider those next steps in the context of these key principles around which the *Prospects & Possibilities* work centers:

- **Fostering a shared understanding of the evidence** that represents the conditions, issues and opportunities that exist (for example, the data and trends information shared and conversations occurring at the original *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions and through this report).
- **Building an awareness of and perspective on what other communities are doing** to stay vital – both the successes and failures from which we can all learn, and what might be replicated.
- **Building stronger connections to people within communities** to support courageous leadership and increase community vitality in the face of decline or growth.
- **Encouraging citizens to better know the skills and attributes they bring to bear** on the tough problems their communities face and to connect with other helpful people and resources to solve those problems and make full use of opportunities.

Thank you for reading this report and for taking the next steps toward community solutions!

Appendix

Demographic Summary

This report focuses on the 36 convening sessions conducted in North Dakota during the last quarter of 2010, with participation of 852 people, and on the North Dakotans who were randomly surveyed in December 2010. The information below paints a picture of all these people, summarizing key demographic information about the 787 who completed at least some portion of the survey during the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions, and the approximately 400 residents who participated in the survey.

North Dakota households were randomly selected to participate in the survey using address-based sampling, and adults were chosen at random from these households using the “most recent birthday” method. Post-stratification weighting based on age and gender (from the 2010 U.S. Census) was used to ensure representativeness of the data. The sampling error of the survey data is less than +/- 5 percent.

Overall, the *Prospects & Possibilities* meeting participants were a group of people very committed to the state. Sixty percent of them had lived in the state for more than 35 years (only 8.4% had lived there less than five years; 12.8% five to 20 years; 18.5% 21-35 years). They were also an older group; more than 55 percent were older than 50. Table 1 summarizes the age distribution:

Table 1: Age Distribution

<i>Prospects & Possibilities Participants</i>			<i>Survey Participants</i>	
Age	Number	Percentage	Age	Percentage
<18	32	4.1%	<18	0%
18-35	151	19.2%	18-34	34%
36-50	166	21.1%	35-49	23%
51-65	335	42.6%	50-64	24%
65+	103	13.1%	65+	19%

Women were in the majority (55%) of those who participated in the *Prospects & Possibilities* meetings. Participants in the statewide survey were equally male (50%) and female (50%). While people from all income strata were represented at the meetings, 45 percent had individual incomes between \$35,000 and \$75,000. Another 27 percent had individual incomes over \$75,000. Income data was not gathered for those polled. Table 2 summarizes the educational distribution of the participants in the North Dakota conversations and survey.

Table 2: Educational Background

<i>Prospects & Possibilities Participants</i>			<i>Survey Participants</i>	
Education	Number	Percentage	Education	Percentage
Less than High School	18	2.3%	High School Diploma or Less	27%
High School Diploma	83	10.8%	Some College/AA Degree	31%
Training after High School	22	2.9%		
Some College	112	14.5%	Bachelor's Degree or More	42%
College Graduate	290	37.6%		
Some Graduate School	62	8.0%		
Graduate Degree	184	23.9%		

The vast majority of participants in the *Prospects & Possibilities* discussions were white. The racial and ethnic percentages are fairly consistent with the diversity of the population across North Dakota.

Table 3: Racial & Ethnic Identity
Prospects & Possibilities Participants

Race	Number	Percentage
Native	31	4.1%
White	700	92.7%
Black	8	1.0%
Latino	3	0.4%
Asian	9	1.2%
Multiracial	4	0.5%

Other demographic descriptors of the participants included place of residence and employment.

Table 4: Place of Residence
Prospects & Possibilities Participants

Which best describes where I live?	Number	Percentage
Farm or Ranch	141	18.2%
In Country (Not on Farm or Ranch)	94	12.1%
Town Under 1,000	105	13.6%
Town 1,000 to 10,000	193	24.9%
Town 10,000 to 50,000	100	12.9%
Town or City Over 50,000	141	18.2%

Table 5: Employment

Prospects & Possibilities Participants

What best describes my employment?	Number	Percentage
Working Full Time	514	65.9%
Working Part Time	100	12.8%
Unemployed	10	1.3%
Retired	78	10.0%
Student	42	5.4%
At Home	36	4.6%

Survey Participants

What best describes my employment?	Percentage
Working Full Time	55%
Working Part Time	13%
Unemployed	7%
Retired	19%
Disabled - Unable to Work	3%
Stay at Home Parent	4%

Quantitative Data on Top Concerns

Prospects & Possibilities Sessions

Meeting participants at each session were asked to vote on which of nine pre-identified issues they thought was the biggest concern or problem to solve. The top nine issues were identified during a telephone poll of North Dakota residents in 2009, which was commissioned by the Bush Foundation and conducted by Wilder Research.

Table 6

First asked, "Which of these is the state's biggest concern or problem to solve?"		
Changing Demographics	204	25.95%
Education	103	13.10%
Health Care	122	15.52%
Housing	86	10.94%
Economy	74	9.41%
Social Services	70	8.91%
Transportation	55	7.00%
Flooding	48	6.11%
Environment/ Pollution	24	3.05%

Table 7

After presentation of data and group discussion asked again, "Which of these is the state's biggest concern or problem to solve?"		
Changing Demographics	329	42.07%
Education	109	13.94%
Health Care	116	14.83%
Housing	62	7.93%
Economy	56	7.16%
Social Services	44	5.63%
Transportation	28	3.58%
Flooding	23	2.94%
Environment / Pollution	15	1.92%

Statewide Survey of Residents

Below are the results to the question posed to respondents: List your top three concerns related to quality of life in North Dakota. As shown below, the most commonly mentioned issues were: education, the economy/jobs, health care, housing, government budgets/spending/taxes and transportation. This is significantly different than in 2009 when two-thirds (67%) of residents felt the economy/jobs was the most important issue, followed by health and health care (29%) and education (17%).

Table 8

List your top three concerns related to quality of life in North Dakota.	
Education	42%
Economy/Jobs	36%
Health Care	29%
Housing	26%
Government/Spending/Taxes	26%
Transportation	25%

Top Concerns by Geography – Urban versus Rural

The following analysis looks at top concerns in North Dakota by area lived as identified by the *Prospects and Possibilities* participants. Using the Turning Point™ survey variable “Where I live,” the categories “rural,” “small town” and “urban” were used for analyses in both states.³ These results are based on participants’ responses to the question, “Which of these is the state’s biggest concern or problem to solve?” after the Wilder presentation. Any participants who did not respond to both questions were not included. The following table summarizes this information.

Table 9

	Rural	%	Small Town	%	Urban	%
Demographic Change	220	43%	37	39%	56	42%
Education	67	13%	14	15%	21	16%
Health Care	84	16%	10	11%	16	12%
Housing	37	7%	14	15%	8	6%
Economy	37	7%	4	4%	11	8%
Social Services	23	5%	5	5%	13	10%
Transportation	16	3%	8	9%	0	-
Flooding	19	4%	1	1%	3	2%
Environment/ Pollution	8	2%	1	1%	6	4%
Total	511	100%	94	100%	134	100%

For North Dakota, demographic change was a top concern regardless of area lived. Education was also a strong concern, regardless of area lived. However, rural participants voted for health care as a top concern more than education, with 16 percent voting for health care as a top concern; and small town participants were equally concerned about housing (15%). Transportation was also a concern for small town participants, with 9 percent voting for transportation (compared to 3% of rural and 0% of urban participants). Social services was more of a concern in urban areas, with 10 percent of urban participants selecting it as their top concern (compared to 5% in rural and small towns). Concerns about the economy accounted for just 4 percent of small town votes and 7 and 8 percent of votes in rural and urban areas, respectively.

Evaluation Questions

At the end of each session, facilitators asked the participants four questions. The table below summarizes the percentage of participants who reported that they “strongly” or “somewhat agreed” with the statement. Refer to pages 5 – 6 for additional analysis on the confidence of North Dakotans in their ability to move the ideas forward.

I am more aware of (the state’s) needs and challenges.	91%
I have confidence that I can help move some of these ideas forward.	84%
The discussion provided a safe space to participate and share opinions.	97%
The discussion represented a good cross-section of people.	69%

³ Categories were created from the Turning Point™ survey categories: “rural” is a composite of the categories “farm or ranch,” “not on a farm or ranch, but in the country,” “town under 1000,” and “town 1,000-10,000”; “small town” was created from “town 10,000-50,000”; and “urban” from “town or city 50,000+”. As a result, the category “rural” tends to be slightly larger than “small town” or “urban.”

Partner Organizations

The Bush Foundation chose to work with the following four North Dakota organizations to assist in the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions. They invited participants and facilitated the conversations. These organizations were selected for their experience in mobilizing and engaging communities and their ability to work across many sectors. North Dakota State University Extension Service was chosen for its capacity to organize and conduct a large number of the sessions and because of its recent work with the St. Paul, MN-based Northwest Area Foundation in the implementation of statewide leadership capacity building. The other convening organizations were then able to work from their strengths in certain geographic regions or with specific populations. The convener organizations were also selected because they are generally seen as “neutral” on issues—some specifically work in helping communities resolve conflict and set priorities.

- **North Dakota State University Extension Service** creates learning partnerships that help adults and youth enhance their lives and communities. With the vision to be the lifelong education network that helps North Dakotans improve their quality of life, it achieves its purpose and vision through diverse programs and partnerships that extend research, technology and knowledge to many audiences. ag.ndsu.edu/extension



- **Consensus Council** is a nonprofit organization that custom designs processes bringing diverse viewpoints together to seek common ground from local to international levels.



Subject areas of consensus processes have included disaster mitigation, economic and rural development, education, environment and natural resources, government restructuring and reform, health care, human services and law. agree.org

- **Strom Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation** at Dickinson State University seeks to inspire leadership, develop business, and advance community throughout southwest North Dakota. It encourages and equips entrepreneurs with tools and support for their businesses, communities, economic development activities and partnerships. In addition to providing business assistance for marketing practices, web and social media, the Strom Center includes the Community Development Project, Business Challenge and the Small Business Development Center. stromcenter.com



- **United Way of Cass-Clay** is located in Fargo, and invests in initiatives and nonprofit agencies and programs throughout Cass and Clay counties. The mission of United Way of Cass-Clay is to bring people together to create lasting change that improves lives. United Way of Cass-Clay works to inspire hope, create opportunities and make the Cass-Clay community a better place to live, work and raise families. unitedwaycassclay.org



Participant Recruitment Methods

Partner organizations chose their own recruitment methods, working from existing relationships in communities. Some used broad invitations through mass mailings. Others took a targeted approach, working through economic developers, community organizations and clients. Session facilitators reiterated at each session that individuals should participate as a community member as opposed to advocating for their organization. Conveners also encouraged participants to take a statewide view, rather than focusing on regional or community self-interest.

Complete Listing of North Dakota *Prospects & Possibilities* Sessions

Listed below are all of the sessions held across North Dakota. The location numbers correspond to the numbered points on the map on page 4.

Location #	City/Town	Date	Time	Convening Partner
1	Bismarck	Oct. 20	5:30 p.m.	Consensus Council
1	Bismarck	Oct. 25	5:30 p.m.	Consensus Council
1	Bismarck	Oct. 26	5:30 p.m.	Consensus Council
1	Bismarck	Nov. 18	8:30 p.m.	Consensus Council
2	Bowbells	Nov. 16	11:30 a.m.	NDSU Extension
3	Carrington	Nov. 23	11:30 a.m.	NDSU Extension
4	Casselton	Nov. 17	4:00 p.m.	United Way
5	Cavalier	Nov. 9	5:00 p.m.	NDSU Extension
6	Devils Lake	Nov. 9	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension
7	Dickinson	Nov. 15	6:00 p.m.	Strom Center
7	Dickinson	Nov. 22	6:00 p.m.	Strom Center
7	Dickinson	Dec. 9	7:00 p.m.	Strom Center
8	Fargo	Nov. 15	5:30 p.m.	United Way
8	Fargo	Nov. 16	5:00 p.m.	United Way
8	Fargo	Nov. 18	11:00 a.m.	United Way
8	Fargo	Dec. 14	6:00 p.m.	United Way
9	Fort Yates	Dec. 16	11:30 a.m.	NDSU Extension
10	Grand Forks	Nov. 9	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension
11	Harvey	Nov. 8	11:30 a.m.	NDSU Extension
12	Hazen	Nov. 17	5:30 p.m.	Consensus Council
13	Killdeer	Nov. 4	6:00 p.m.	Strom Center
14	Langdon	Nov. 16	5:00 p.m.	NDSU Extension
15	Larimore	Nov. 16	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension
16	Mandan	Nov. 1	5:30 p.m.	Consensus Council
17	Medora & Beach	Oct. 27	6:00 p.m.	Strom Center
18	Minot	Nov. 15	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension
19	New Town	Dec. 14	11:30 a.m.	NDSU Extension
20	Oakes	Nov. 23	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension
21	Park River	Dec. 2	5:00 p.m.	NDSU Extension
22	Rolette	Nov. 8	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension
23	Towner	Nov. 23	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension
24	Underwood	Nov. 23	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension
25	Valley City	Nov. 16	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension
26	Wahpeton	Nov. 29	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension
27	Williston	Nov. 22	10:30 a.m.	NDSU Extension
28	Wishek	Nov. 15	5:30 p.m.	NDSU Extension

About the Sessions

Sessions were generally three hours in length. Most sessions were held in the late afternoon and evening, after primary work hours. A primary facilitator explained the process and kept it moving. Most conveners also had a master recorder and note takers at each table group of generally six to eight people.

Session Goals

The meetings were structured to:

- Enable participants to learn about North Dakota data and what's coming in the future;
- Connect with others through conversations;
- Hear about how people talk about the future and the things that present challenges;
- Generate ideas *together* about how to address tough problems; and
- Influence decisions in the state and in communities.

Session Process

The following meeting outline was followed in all 36 sessions:

- **Introductions and open-ended questions.** The meeting started with brief introductions and an open-ended question about what people love about North Dakota.
- **Gathering participant demographic information.** Next all meeting participants were introduced to “Turning Point™” technology—hand-held clickers—that were used throughout the meeting. This technology enabled individuals to vote anonymously and to gather quantitative data from the session. The first exercise involved gathering demographic information about the participants. (See pages 27 – 28 for the demographic overview.)
- **Identification of key state issues.** Rather than start with a totally open-ended question, the discussion of concerns began by asking participants to vote on which of nine issues facing the state of North Dakota they perceived to be the biggest issue. The top nine issues were identified during a telephone poll of North Dakota citizens in 2009.

The goal of this exercise was to narrow the list to the top two issues of concern. After the initial vote, additional trend data compiled by Wilder Research was provided to the group in printed handouts and in an audio-visual format. The charts and graphs included in this report and on pages 35 – 42 were also provided to participants. The group then engaged in further discussion about the issues, after which a second vote was taken. (See page 29 for an overview of the initial and second votes for top concerns.)

- **Defining “elements” of those top issues.** In an effort to make large, complex issues more actionable, conversation and another round of voting helped to more narrowly define the top concerns. For example, if the top vote getter was “demographic changes,” participants were asked to identify key components (e.g., aging population requiring more social services, migration of youth out of the state, diminishing tax base, loss of farming revenue, etc.) and then voted again.

- **Generating ideas and solutions.** After discussing the elements, participants were asked to suggest ideas and solutions to the top elements. These too were put to a vote for favorite or those with the greatest promise. In some sessions the participants had time to discuss both of their top concerns. In other sessions, the discussion was so robust that they only had time to discuss their No. 1 issue.
- **Evaluation questions.** At the end of the session, facilitators asked participants several questions to get their input about the process.

The Bush Foundation also contracted with the Citizens League of Minnesota for use of their [CitiZing.org](https://www.citizing.org/) civic networking tool that allows the archiving and review of all session notes and results. It also provides an opportunity for all citizens to share their ideas and input on issues important to them and stay informed about next steps.

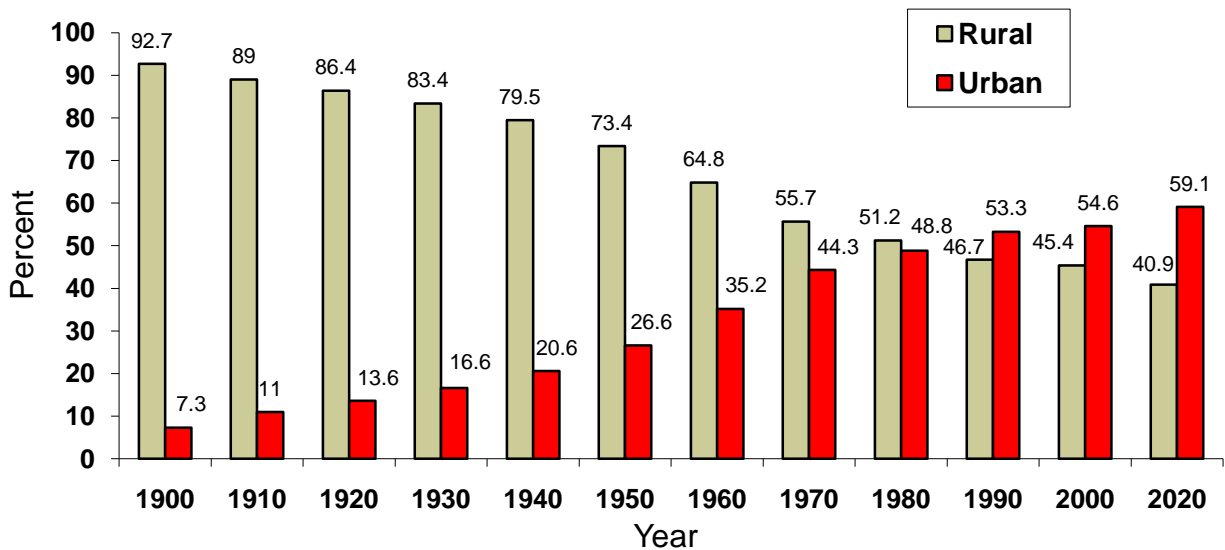
Additional Data

In August 2010, Wilder Research prepared a research report for the Bush Foundation on various trends affecting North Dakota. Below are some of the charts that were gathered as part of that research and shared with the participants in the *Prospects & Possibilities* sessions to help inform their conversations. The charts and graphs included in the body of the report were also part of the handouts provided to session participants.

Population Trends

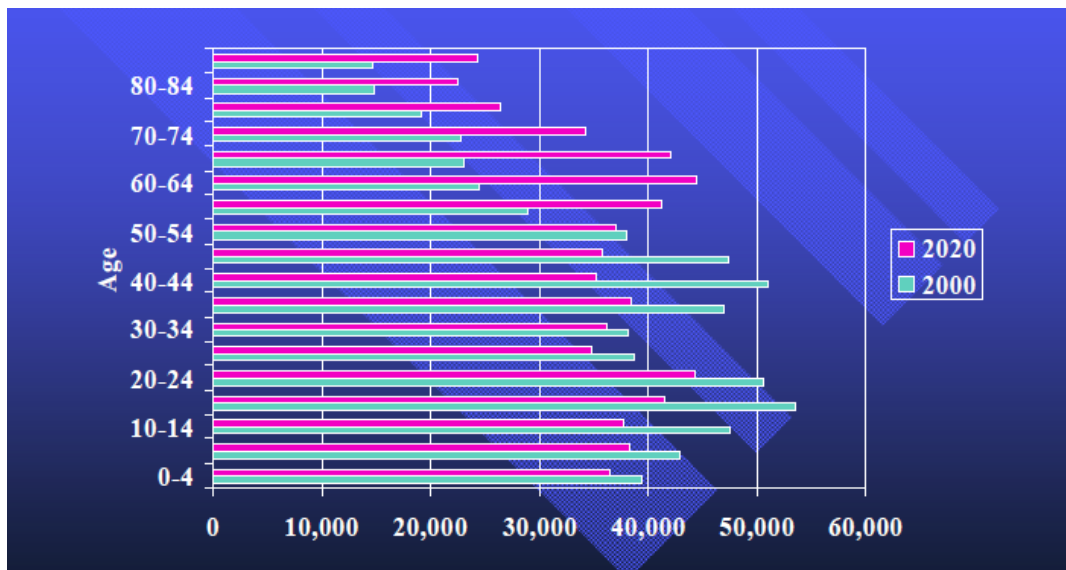
Five interrelated population trends are creating a geographic and age imbalance in North Dakota – rural depopulation, rapid growth in 15 cities such as Fargo and Bismarck, consistent and continuing migration away from farms and out of the state by young adults and young families, the continuing decline in the number of children and the increasing proportion of elderly residents.

Rural-Urban Population Distribution: North Dakota, 1900-2020



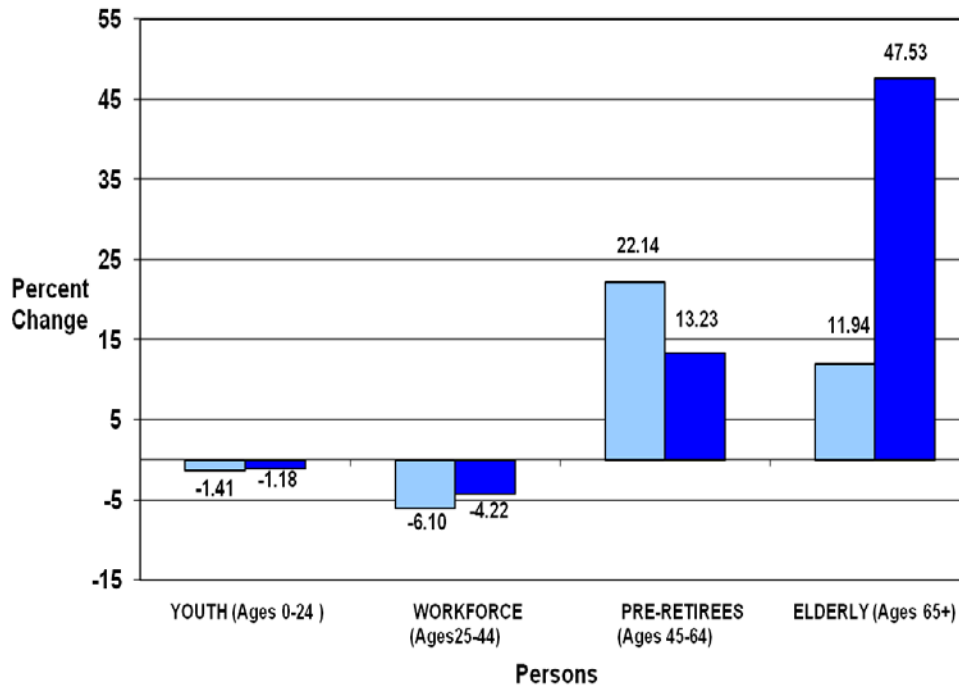
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Decennial Censuses

Population by Age: North Dakota, 2000 and 2020 (Projected)



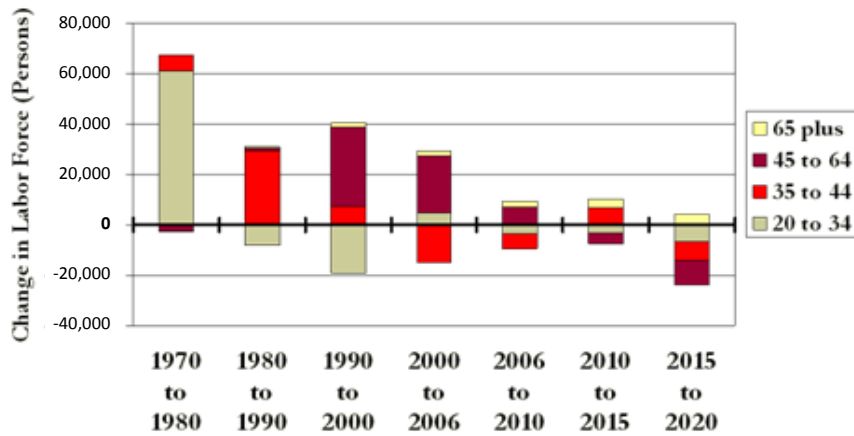
Source: North Dakota State Data Center

Percent Change in Persons: North Dakota, 2000-2020



Source: North Dakota State Data Center

Change in North Dakota's Labor Force by Age: 1970 – 2020



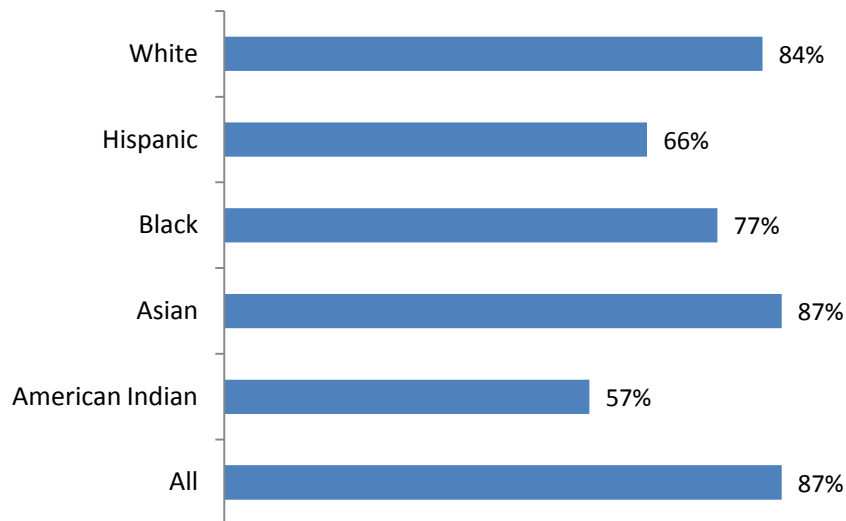
Note: The change in labor force participation was calculated for 2010, 2015 and 2020 by applying the 2006 ACS labor force participation rates to the population projections.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 Census, 2006 ACS. North Dakota State Data Center, North Dakota Population Projections by Age and Gender: 2010, 2015, 2020

Education

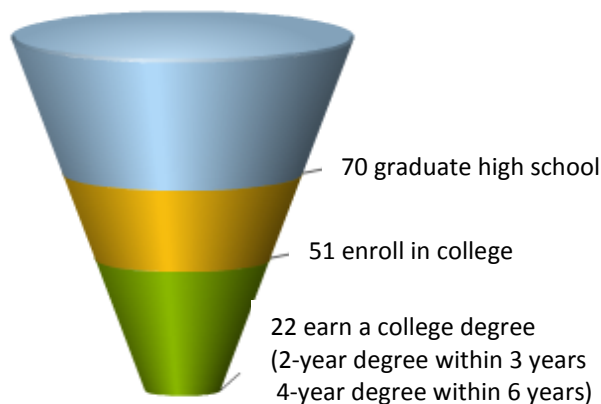
Various agencies collect and report data about education and graduation rates, analyzing and interpreting it in different ways. The chart on page 13, which lists the percentage of high school students graduating on time as reported by the Alliance for Education Excellence, was shared with meeting participants. Many expressed shock at the low rates of graduation, especially for Hispanic and American Indian students. As a result, the Bush Foundation, in partnership with Wilder Research, explored other data sources. The chart below from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction presents a view that is slightly more encouraging. We chose to include this chart not only to show this alternative data, but to point out that citizens and state legislators need access to understandable and reliable data, and good processes for discussing the meaning of the data as it affects their communities.

High School Students Graduating on Time by Racial and Ethnic Group: North Dakota, 2007 – 2008



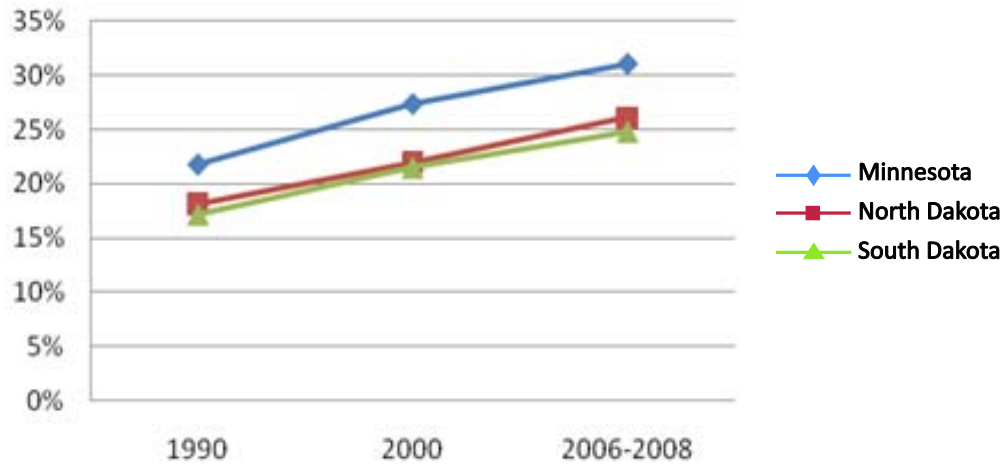
Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, North Dakota State Profile 2008-2009
dpi.state.nd.us/dpi/reports/profile/0809/ProfileDistrict/99999.pdf

North Dakota High School Students Who Earn College Degrees (Out of 100)



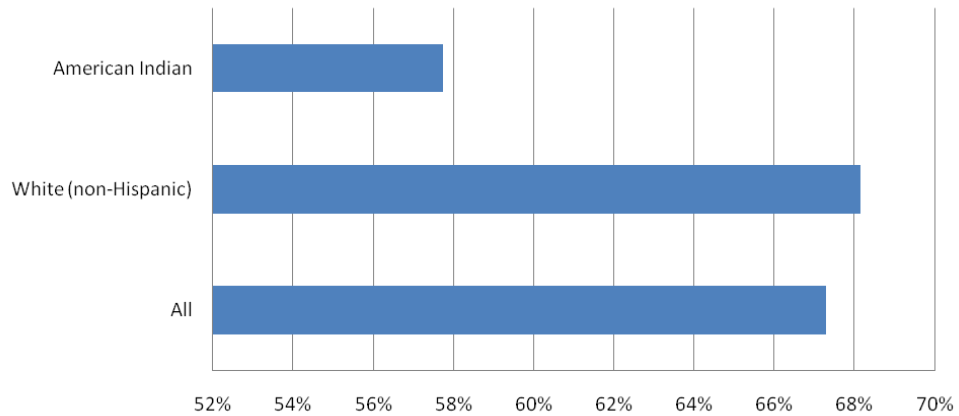
Source: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

Percent (Age 25+) with a Bachelors Degree or Higher: 1990 – 2008



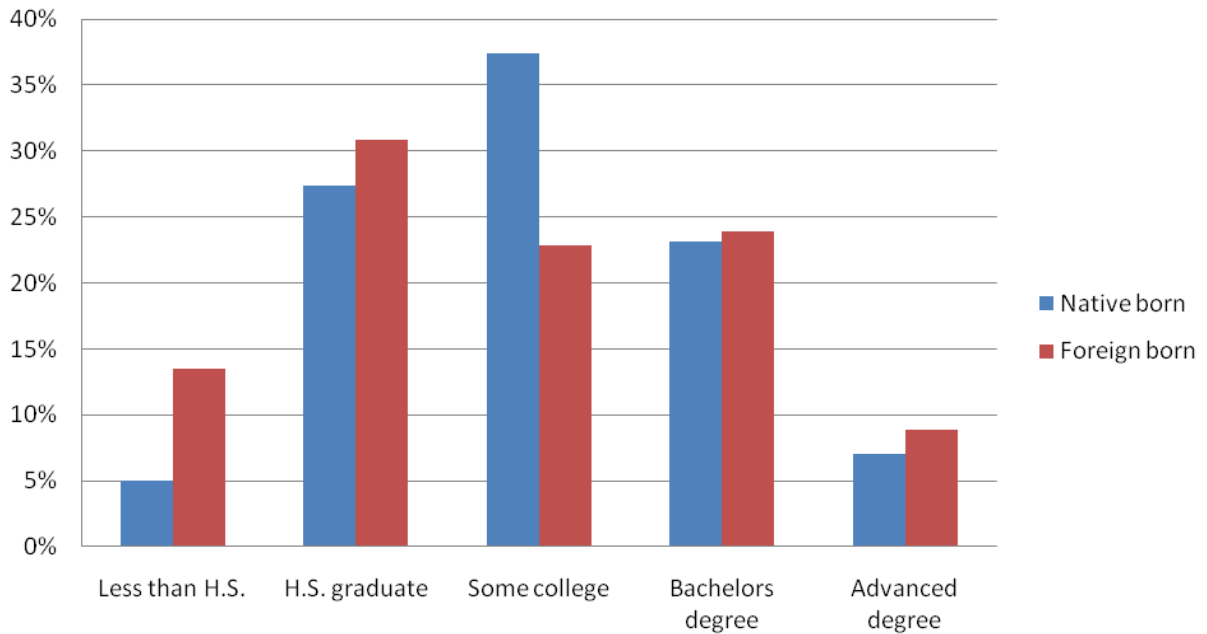
Source: Wilder Research compiled from IPUMS-ACS

Percentage (Age 25-64) with a Postsecondary Education: North Dakota, 2006 – 2008



Source: Wilder Research compiled from IPUMS-ACS

**Educational Attainment of Residents (Ages 25-64)
by Nativity: North Dakota, 2006 – 2008**

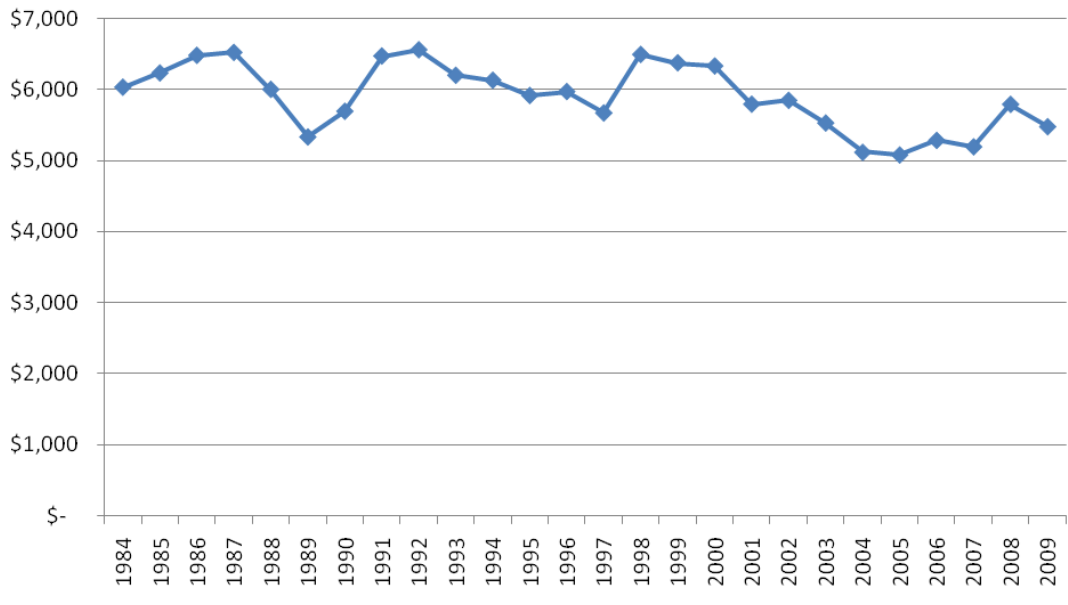


Source: Wilder Research compiled from IPUMS-ACS

State Funding for Higher Education and Student Debt

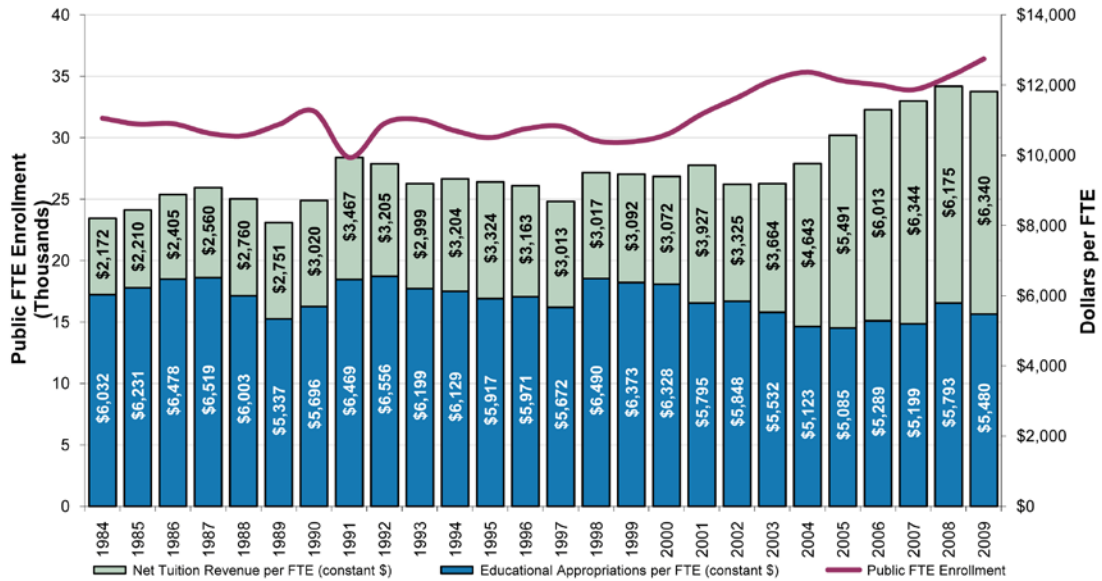
As higher education funding per student and total appropriations have declined and become a smaller part of state spending over the past decade, higher education institutions have relied increasingly on tuition to cover expenses, making college relatively less affordable.

North Dakota State Appropriations for Higher Education per FTE Student



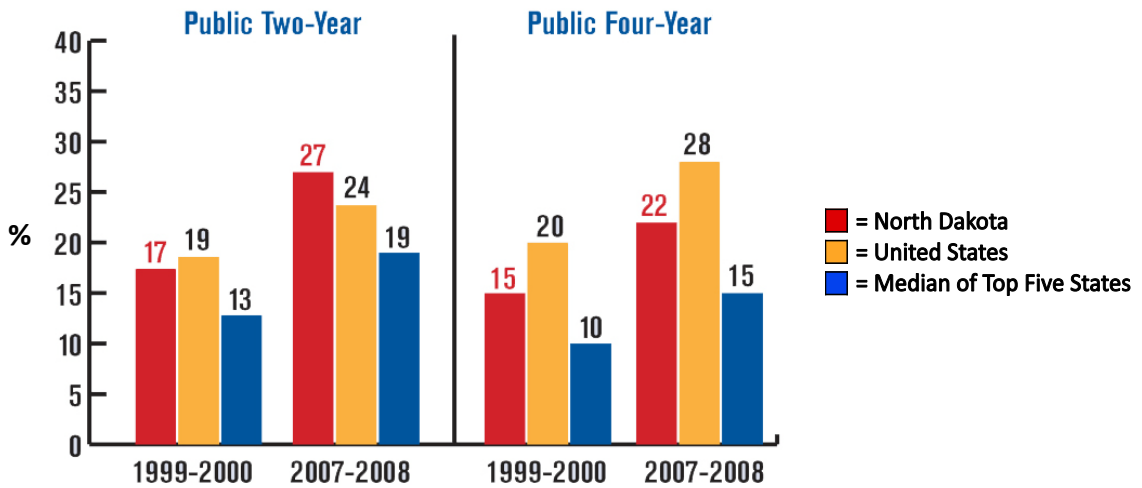
Source: State Higher Education Executive Officers. sheeo.org/finance/shef/shef_data09.htm

Public FTE Enrollment, Educational Appropriations and Total Educational Revenue per FTE: North Dakota, Fiscal Year 1984 – 2009



Note: Constant 2009 dollars adjusted by SHEEO Higher Education Cost Adjustment. 2009 Educational Appropriations include ARRA funds. (HECA) Source: SSDB

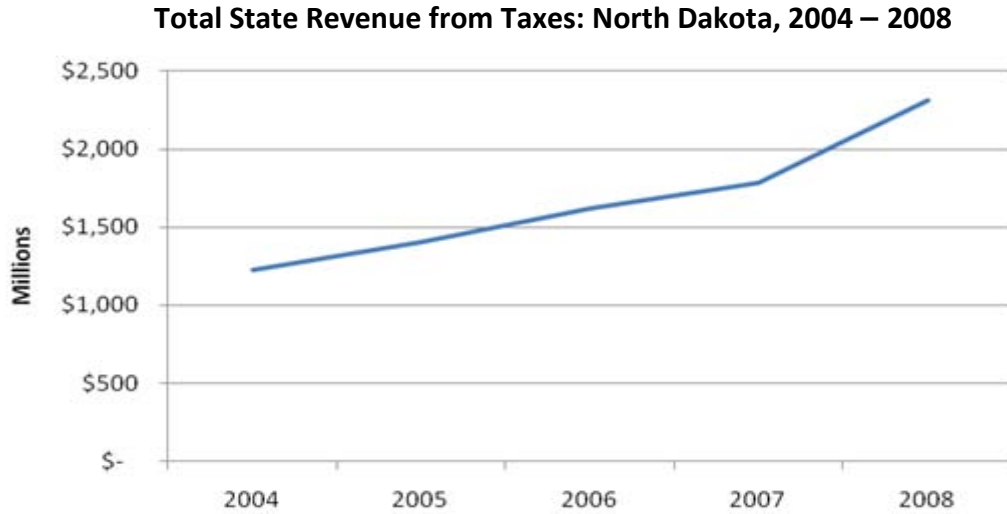
Affordability of College: Percentage of Income Needed to Pay for Public Two- and Four-Year Colleges, 1999 – 2008



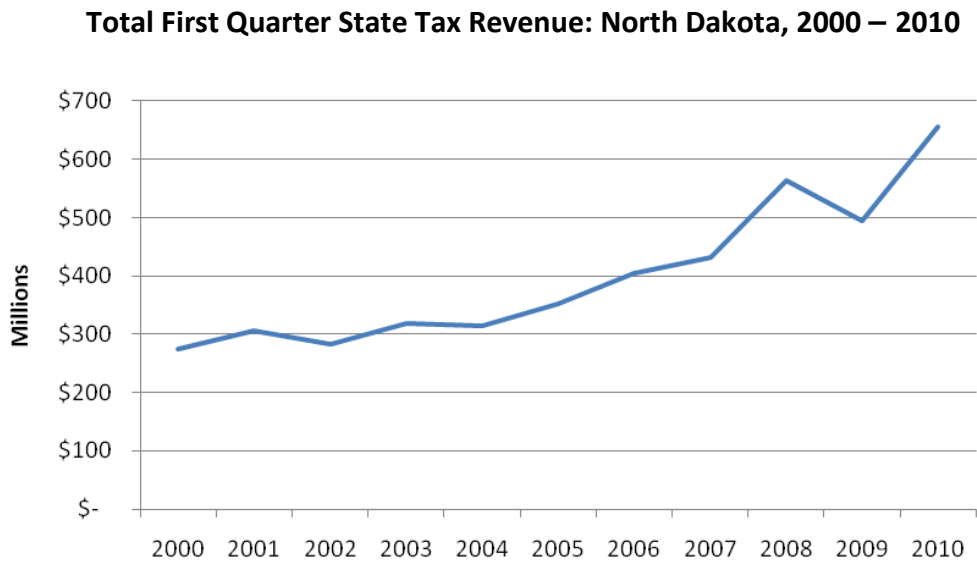
Source: The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Measuring Up 2008*
measuringup2008.highereducation.org/print/state_reports/long/ND.pdf

Revenue and Spending

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, tax revenue increased considerably in North Dakota from 2004 to 2008, dipped in 2009, but then rebounded in 2010, reflecting its strong economy during the decade. Taxes make up a growing share of total state revenue.

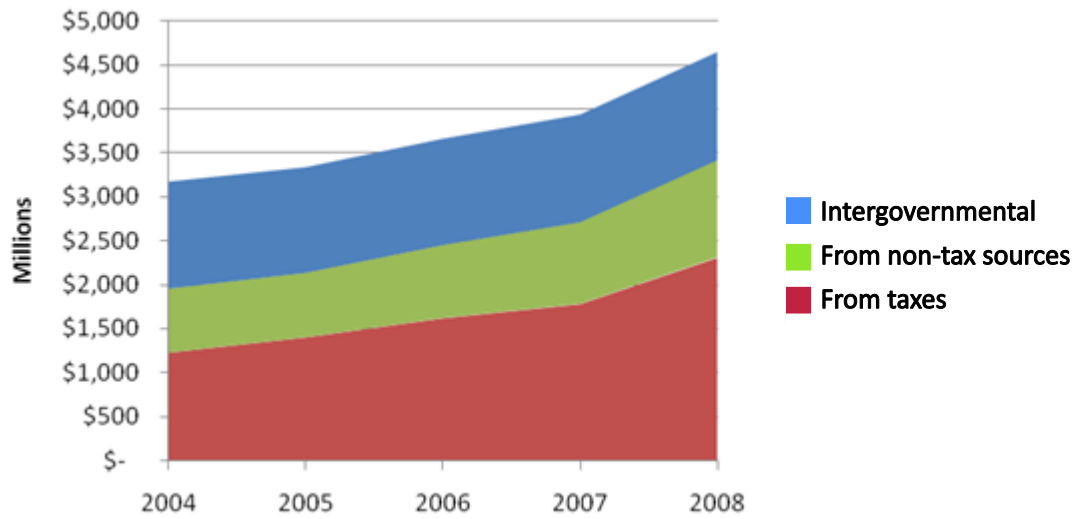


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Summary of State and Local Tax Revenue



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual survey of state and local government finance census.gov/qovs/estimate

State Revenue by Type: North Dakota, 2004 – 2008



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Summary of State and Local Tax Revenue census.gov/govs/qtax

Additional Resources – North Dakota

Below are some websites that provide additional data and resources for the state of North Dakota.

Business in North Dakota

North Dakota Department of Commerce – www.business.nd.gov/default.asp

Education

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction – dpi.state.nd.us

Teacher salaries – teachersalaryinfo.com/average-teacher-salary-north-dakota.html

Education links – ndsba.org/other/links.asp

Health Care

North Dakota Hospital Association – ndha.org

North Dakota Rural Health Association – ndrha.org

North Dakota Health Workforce Information Center –
hwic.org/states/introduction.php?id=174

2010 Snapshot of North Dakota’s Health Care Workforce –
hwic.org/states/introduction.php?id=174

Other

Statewide Technology Access for Government and Education Network Strategic Plan
stagenet.nd.gov/misc/strategic-plan.pdf

North Dakota State Data Center

www.ndsu.nodak.edu/sdc/data/ruralurbanmetrononmetro.htm#rural