



North Dakota
Economic Security
and Prosperity
Alliance

**North Dakota Economic Security & Prosperity Alliance (NDESPA) Meeting
Monday, November 17, 2014**

Draft Meeting Summary

Proposed Meeting Goals:

- To reconvene in a spirit of collegiality and cooperation;
- To complete the revised strategic plan for NDESPA;
- To review options and opportunities for NDESPA; and
- To receive partner updates and news of interest.

NDESPA Partners Participating: Renee Stromme and Caitlin McDonald (ND Women’s Network); Stuart Savelkoul (ND United); Sarah Hasbargen (ND Community Action Partnership); Linda Isakson (ND Council on Abused Women’s Services); Rhonda Styles-Rohde (Charles Hall Youth Services); Joey Kolosky (West River Head Start); Karen Ehrens (Creating a Hunger Free ND and Healthy ND); Lorraine Davis (Native American Development Center); Rep. Josh Boschee (D – Fargo)

Facilitated by: The Consensus Council, Inc.

Welcome, Introductions & Process Review: Partners were welcomed to the meeting and provided self-introductions. The partners reviewed the consensus-based decision-making process and affirmed the ground rules for discussion.

NDESPA Strategic Planning Review: Partners reviewed the revised NDESPA strategic plan and provided recommendations for other initiatives to keep on the coalition radar including:

- The status of the failed 2013 “milk” bill
- The CARE Act (AARP ND will be a resource on this)
- Proposed criminal charges against pregnant women for consumption of drugs
- Appropriations for social innovation funds
- NDESPA partners in the early childhood area working in cooperation with the ND Department of Public Instruction on appropriations (Pre-K, early childhood, Head Start, etc.)

There was also discussion relative to how NDESPA – and individual partners – can use the promise of ballot initiatives as a strategy for persuasion on particular issues. It was agreed that more information and assistance is needed from ND Childcare Aware to flesh out strategic goal #3 – Consensus Council staff will follow-up with NDCA staff in this regard.

NDESPA Partners are invited to review the updated strategic plan at: <http://ndespa.org>.

Other News/Opportunities/Activities of Interest: Consensus Council staff shared information regarding the potential convening of a statewide meeting with the CFED Savings & Financial Integration Opportunity initiative. More information will be available after a scheduled conference call later in November.

NDESPA Partners discussed the opportunity to sponsor public presentations/screenings of the documentary film: *Pay 2 Play: Democracy's High Stakes*. It was agreed that NDESPA would not pursue this option, at this time.

Organizational Updates: NDESPA Partners shared the following organizational updates:

- Rep. Boschee indicated that the Democratic Caucus would welcome NDESPA to provide information regarding legislative initiatives impacting low and moderate-income people. In addition, he will arrange an opportunity for NDESPA representatives to meet with the caucus during the organizational session in December. He was able to confirm that several bills that will be of importance to NDESPA Partners are already being drafted.
- Rhonda reported that CHYS (<http://www.charleshallyouthservices.com>) has reopened their third house for youth, with limited occupancy and staffing – they continue to experience funding challenges as well as difficulty with recruitment and retention of qualified staff. They received a \$50,000 grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation that they are now fundraising to match.
- Lorraine provided an update on the NADC that has received a grant from the ND Humanities Council for the Native American Stories of Resilience initiative. They also have additional grant proposals pending. The NADC is working with Agency MABU on a fundraising campaign that would address their priorities of financial literacy as well as mentoring for those leaving the corrections system. The NADC is also a partner with the ND Indian Business Alliance who will be sponsoring a regional summit in Bismarck December 8-9, 2014: <http://ndiba.com/summit/>
- Linda noted that NDCAWS (<http://www.ndcaws.org>) is continuing to seek applicants for their mental health and legal services programs in western ND. They are also working on their public policy agenda that will be finalized after release of the Governors budget in early December.
- Karen shared information about the 2015 Summit being convened by the Creating a Hunger Free ND Coalition (<https://www.facebook.com/hungerfreund>). The Summit will be held September 17-18, 2015 in Bismarck. The coalition is also in the process of building a website for greater visibility as well as access to information. Healthy ND (<http://home.healthynd.org>) has identified three priority issues/challenges in their work that include lack of housing, lack of childcare and lack of workforce. They have also noted data showing advanced signs of aging in first responders and essential workers across the state, likely secondary to stressful work environments and demands. Both the CHFND and Healthy ND initiatives are hopeful that the Governors budget will include additional funding to address gaps and shortfalls in meeting these identified needs.
- Renee shared that, for the NDWN (<http://www.ndwomen.org>) the recent election was all consuming but ultimately had good outcomes, particularly on the initiated measures. She is pleased to report that ND now has 27 women serving in the legislature, an all-

time high, and equal to 19% of the total members serving. She anticipates that there will be a number of important pieces of legislation coming forward in 2015 including reproductive rights, human/sexual trafficking, and economic security for women and families. Renee continues to reach out to the ND Department of Human Services to effect change in college savings programs being counted as assets. It's the hope of NDESPA that this could be changed via rulemaking. She noted that the NDWN has received financial support from the national Women's Equality Center and that many of the goals for this initiative are consistent with those of NDESPA. There is potential for greater collaborative work, particularly in the areas of messaging, outreach, media and blogging. The Women's Lobby Day (WE RISE) will be March 8-9, 2015. All were invited to look at the new NDWN logo!

- Joey indicated that there would likely be legislation coming forward from the ND Head Start Association (<http://www.ndheadstart.com>) with respect to state funding, where there is presently none. Such an effort might be in concert with the ND Department of Public Instruction budget bill. Joey is awaiting more information from the recent meeting of the NDHSA that he was unable to attend.
- Sarah reported that the NDCAP (<http://www.capnd.org>) has received some additional funding for the Individual Development Account (IDA) program. This funding has opened up additional "slots" in Community Action Agencies statewide. NDESPA Partners are strongly encouraged to promote the program to anyone who would benefit from matched savings for a home purchase, to start a business or to attend college. Sarah also shared information about the great response from the Sportsmen Against Hunger program that, in addition to the typical game donations (deer and goose), can now also donate elk and bison harvested in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. She also indicated that there is some funding in the ND Department of Commerce Budget to support the home weatherization program as well as funding for emergency assistance—all remain hopeful that these are also included in the Governors budget.

Next Meeting: NDESPA Partners agreed to begin the scheduling of meetings on Friday afternoons during the legislative session as this process worked well in 2013. The next meeting of NDESPA will be ***Friday, January 23, 2015 from Noon – 2:00*** at the Consensus Council office (bring a brown bag lunch and we will provide dessert!).

NDESPA Partners were thanked for their commitment to this important work and the meeting was adjourned by group consensus with best wishes for happy holidays!

NDESPA Mission: *The North Dakota Economic Security & Prosperity Alliance works to build and sustain a system of economic security for all through poverty awareness and education, grassroots and community capacity building, research and data development, and promotion of policies and practices to eliminate disparities and obstacles for achieving economic security.*