



North Dakota Economic Security and Prosperity Alliance

North Dakota Economic Security & Prosperity Alliance (NDESPA) Meeting Thursday, June 11, 2015 Draft Meeting Summary

Proposed Meeting Goals:

- To reconvene in a spirit of collegiality and cooperation;
- To receive partner updates and news of interest;
- To review and discuss 2015 legislative outcomes and interim studies selected; and
- To review outcomes from the June 3-4, 2015 *Financial Capability Integration Workshop*.

Meeting Participants: Renee Stromme and Caitlin McDonald (ND Women's Network), Karen Ehrens (Creating a Hunger Free ND & Healthy ND), Janelle Moos (ND CAWS), Rhonda Styles-Rhode (Charles Hall Youth Services), and Amy Armstrong, Ashley and Jana (A-Step and ASPIRE Programs at ND Center for Persons with Disabilities)

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.

Partner/Organizational Updates: NDESPA Partners shared the following organizational updates:

- *The ND Women's Network* will host *Ready 2 Run* in Fargo in the fall; Women's Equality Day (8/26/15) events are being planned, including an event at the former Governor's Mansion in Bismarck; the NDWN Annual Meeting and Woman of the Year event will be held in Bismarck in October; Caitlin shared highlights of her experience at the Tri-College New Leadership Program, noting that the program received 3 times as many applicants as could be accommodated. More information: <http://ndwomen.org>
- *NDCAWS* has partnered with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) in seeking federal funding for a Task Force focused on human trafficking; Legal Issues training has reached 5 new DV/SA Executive Directors and 25 new advocates from across the state; several DV/SA programs are gearing up for growth through new building renovations or projects and/or land purchases including the cities of Dickinson, Williston and Minot. More information: <http://www.ndcaws.org>
- *Creating a Hunger Free ND* is promoting use of the summer food programs – locations for programs can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks>. The CHFND Summit planning continues and is scheduled for Bismarck, September 17 – 18, 2015. National speakers confirmed include people from the Federal Reserve, Feeding America, and the AARP Foundation Drive to End Hunger; it was noted that Public Health programs across the state, but particularly in western ND, are struggling with staff recruitment

and retention. Creative solutions being attempted include establishing workplace childcare centers. It was noted that the receptionist staff in one Public Health Service Unit are ages 76 and 80; finding replacements for these workers will be a challenge due to the low unemployment, competitive wages and many vacant positions from which to choose; the Watford City Hospital has been approved to open a childcare center but, despite advertising for a year, has not been able to find/hire a qualified Director for the program. More information: <http://home.healthynd.org/?id=53>

- *CHYS* has all of its residential facilities open again and is serving both boys and girls; the grant funded programs for tutoring and for outreach to Tribal leaders is moving forward. More information: <http://www.charleshallyouthservices.com>
- The *A-STEP and ASPIRE* grant funded programs were reviewed with NDESPA Partners. More information: <http://www.ndcpd.org/projects.html#.VYMYOkskpL>
- The *Consensus Council* has hired Scott Fry as a Senior Program Director; he has past experiences as an organizer for the Idaho and Dakota Resource Councils and will begin his new position on June 16 – his work will include helping NDESPA in organizing and growing the coalition; the Council will be making application for the federal Navigator program for ND, the proposal is due June 15; the most recent round for proposals for Community Innovation Grants closed at the end of May – a total of 29 proposals were received and final decisions will be made in mid-July. More information: <http://agree.org>

Legislative Outcomes for NDESPA:

Interim Studies Selected: Partners reviewed the interim studies selected by Legislative Management at their meeting of May 27 and noted these as important to the work of the Coalition:

- 3049 – Employment restrictions in public benefit programs
- 1302 – Voter registration
- 1378 & 1035 – Health Care reform
- 2048 – Behavioral health
- 2206 – Transition for costs of social services to transfer from county mill levies to general appropriations

It was agreed that Scott would be available to more closely follow the work of interim committees on behalf of NDESPA and report the committee activities back to the Coalition.

Asset Changes: Renee reported on the successful outcome of the NDESPA request for changes to the asset limits of assistance programs. As of 4/20/15, 529 and 530 College Savings Programs no longer count as an “asset” when calculating program eligibility for TANF, SNAP and LIHEAP. More information: <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/40019/40019.htm>. This is a great example of policy change that occurs when working proactively with a state agency and it is hoped that this change would encourage more families to access the 529 and 530 programs to build assets for the future. Much credit is due to Renee Stromme for leading this effort. The staff members from CFED have asked for details about this policy change and may use it in their newsletter, at some point.

There is also potential to expand the College Savings programs through a more direct partnership with the Bank of North Dakota. It was agreed that Renee would brief Scott on this issue and that we would discuss it again at a future meeting.

CFED/NDESPA *Financial Capability Integration Workshop* June 3-4, 2015: About 22 people, representing 10+ organizations, attended the workshop. Those in attendance have the opportunity to apply for a \$20,000, 12-month technical assistance grant from CFED to implement financial capability integration into their programs.

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn: The next NDESPA meeting is scheduled for ***Thursday, August 6 from noon – 2:00*** at the Consensus Council office or by conference phone. The meeting was adjourned by group consensus.

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.*

Working Draft