



# North Dakota Economic Security and Prosperity Alliance

**North Dakota Economic Security & Prosperity Alliance (NDESPA) Meeting  
Wednesday, January 29, 2014  
Consensus Council Office – 1003 E Interstate Ave, Suite 7**

## **Meeting Summary**

### **Proposed Meeting Goals:**

- To reconvene in a spirit of collegiality and cooperation;
- To develop a revised strategic plan for NDESPA; and
- To receive partner updates and news of interest.

**NDESPA Partners participating:** Linda Isakson and Bridget Maloney (CAWS ND), Linda Reinicke, Sandy Tibke and Penny Smith (Childcare Aware ND), Doreen Riedman and Carla Marsland (AARP ND), Sarah Hasbargen (ND Community Action Partnership), Tim Mathern (ND State Senator), Renee Stromme (ND Women’s Network), April Fairfield (Bush Fellow), Karen Ehrens (Creating a Hunger Free ND), Paul Griffin and Rose Stoller (Consensus Council).

**Facilitated by:** The Consensus Council, Inc.

**Welcome, Introductions & Process Review:** NDESPA partners were welcomed to the meeting and, in the interest of time, agreed to begin the meeting by working on the strategic plan and prioritizing goals before providing organizational updates.

**NDESPA Strategic Planning:** NDESPA Partners reviewed the inventories of strengths, trends and potential goals developed at the December meeting and prioritized them using a simple “dot” process. The prioritized goals appear at the end of this summary. It was agreed that Consensus Council staff would develop the priority goals with strategies and action steps for the partners to finalize at the next meeting. It was agreed that many of the goals fit together to build an ambitious, yet doable, plan of work for the next two (2) years and beyond.

**NDESPA Updates:** Partners reviewed the CFED Assets & Opportunities Scorecard information (embargoed until January 30), noting areas of needed work particularly with respect to minority populations and asset building.

Partners discussed the NDESPA premiere of the film *“Inequality for All”* held January 21 (in partnership with the ND Human Rights Coalition and the ND Community Action Partnership). While it was disappointing that no policy makers attended, there were 62 viewers attending on a cold and stormy evening. The audience was a mix of advocates, general public and college students and there was good discussion following the film. The local Cinema 100 will also be showing the film on March 27 and generally draws a crowd of 300 viewers between the two

showings. There was discussion about NDESPA sponsoring a panel discussion after the 5:30 p.m. film that would also include a state budget presentation by April Fairfield. Staff will work with Renee Stromme and April Fairfield on the arrangements. Additional showings of the film are in the works for Fargo and Grand Forks in March.

The NDESPA website continues to be “under construction” and should be ready to launch sometime in February. It will be a simple, lean, user-friendly site that will include the NDESPA blog now located at <http://ndespa.blogspot.com/p/about-ndespa.html>.

**NDESPA Partner Updates:** Partners provided updates regarding current activities of their organizations, as follows:

- Linda R., Sandy and Penny (Childcare Aware) reported on the implementation of the new childcare subsidies noting that over 500 additional children have accessed these since passed by the ND legislature. There continue to be challenges to providing enough quality care, particularly in the western part of the state. Childcare Aware has been regularly reporting to/working with the interim Economic Impact Legislative Committee.
- Sarah (ND Community Action Partnership) reported on their efforts to arrange “Inequality for All” film showings in Fargo and Grand Forks. She also invited partners to watch the public service announcement about Individual Development Accounts (IDA) starring ND celebrity Josh Duhamel: <http://www.capnd.org/>
- Renee (ND Women’s Network) shared information about Giving Hearts Day (2/13/14) and the Ready 2 Run program scheduled for Fargo on March 19.
- Doreen (AARP ND) introduced Carla, a student intern from the University of Mary – welcome, Carla! Doreen noted that AARP continues to work on issues related to financial security and they will be sponsoring workshops on frauds and scams across the state in March. They are also focused on educational activities regarding the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and have done training with the Community Action staff. They are working with the tribal navigators and others to educate them about the enrollment process. Doreen noted that there continue to be many myths about the ACA among the general public.
- April reported that her Bush Fellowship continues to go well and that the next couple of months are targeted more toward self-care and personal development. She also noted that the Brain Injury Association of ND recently received a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation to continue their advocacy work.
- Linda I (ND CAWS) introduced Bridget, the new AmeriCorps VISTA – welcome Bridget! Linda noted that ND CAWS is hiring a community organizer for western ND and more details can be found here: [Public Relations & Communications Coordinator Position](#). She shared that, even though the federal budget has been passed, the losses experienced as a result of sequestration are long lasting. The ND Land Board met and gave out the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of oil impact grants, several of which will go toward battling domestic violence and sexual assault. There continues to be challenges for domestic violence shelters in finding staff. This has forced some facilities to downsize, in spite of the growing need. The housing crunch continues to move from west to east, impacting the need for affordable housing statewide. There is a need for more mental health services in the western part of the state and the lack of any inpatient care has reached a crisis point. The local jails have seen an increase in people with mental illness being incarcerated when they would be better

treated in a hospital setting. Rural hospitals continue to struggle for adequate staffing as well as low reimbursements and increasing debt load. Partners were also asked to watch for more information on the upcoming Race to Zero, sponsored by NDCAWS, the Abused Adult Resource Center, Prevent Child Abuse ND and the ND National Guard.

- Karen (Creating a Hunger Free ND) reported that the coalition is in the re-grouping phase and is looking for resources to support their ongoing work. On the national level, the US House of Representatives passed the Farm Bill this morning and the US Senate is expected to follow suit. The bill includes cuts to SNAP and SNAP education that compounds cuts already made. NDESPA Partners join in congratulating the Great Plains Food Bank for being awarded the Bush Prize of \$500,000.
- Rose and Paul (Consensus Council) reported on the upcoming Bush Community Innovation Grants for North Dakota. The first of seven (7) quarterly grant rounds will open on March 3, 2014. It is anticipated that approximately ten (10) grants will be awarded per quarter for a total of \$75,000/quarter. Applications will be online and available on the Consensus Council website soon.

Partners discussed the ongoing housing challenges and questioned who, if anyone, is really taking a lead in the state on affordable housing issues. There was discussion of the Housing Alliance of ND (HAND) that now appears to be defunct. Several partners agreed to request a meeting with the new Executive Director of the ND Housing Finance Agency to determine what advocacy opportunities exist for NDESPA, and/or whom they see as taking a lead already.

The ND USDA Rural Development office will be opening requests for proposals for several grants including new funding for mental health facilities in rural areas. More information regarding this \$50 million investment announced in December 2013 is available here: [USDA News Release](#). The Consensus Council will arrange a meeting with USDA RD staff, mental health advocates and other interested partners, to review eligibility requirements.

**Next Meeting:**

Thursday, March 6 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Location:**

The Consensus Council office or by conference call.

***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.*

## NDESPA Priority Goals

January 29, 2014

5 dots	To develop realistic, compelling messaging about poverty and economic gaps in ND (translate oil \$\$).
5 dots	To continue to promote public policies that build assets for LMI people.
4 dots	To implement a comprehensive approach to build capacity and quality of care in early childhood settings.
3 dots	To develop stronger public and political will to advance issues prioritized by NDESPA.
3 dots	To assist in promotion and monitoring the implementation of ACA and Medicaid Expansion
2 dots	To pass a state EITC.
2 dots	To develop a strategy for raising pertinent issues/questions at candidate debates and forum in 2014.
1 dot	To secure state funding for Head Start.
1 dot	To expand tax credit initiatives for charitable giving.
1 dot	To increase use of data in media and Op Ed's to educate the public and policymakers.
0 dots	To develop a Legislative Report card for NDESPA supported issues.
0 dots	To increase access to quality behavioral healthcare.
0 dots	To develop and nurture a strong working relationship with the DHS Executive Director.
0 dots	To assure data-driven decision-making within the coalition and by policymakers.
0 dots	To develop proven policy proscriptions.
0 dots	To employ a balance between data and anecdotal information in telling the NDESPA (and constituent) stories.
Add on	To work with business, early childhood and interested partners to ????? ("School readiness" tax legislation)
Add on	To implement a comprehensive approach to build capacity and quality of care in early childhood settings.

Notes:

- *Housing – no key players?*
- *Food – increased cost of living –  
Access to food –  
Cuts to SNAP (Nov 13) -  
Reducing benefit amounts –  
Mobile food pantries –  
Rural grocers struggling -*
- *Minimum Wage –*
- *Child care trend – tax credits to businesses*
  - *LA post hurricane – tax credit directly to parents; for center staff; directors – refundable – must be linked to quality care.*
  - *Current pilot in Cass and Ward Counties – Williams County as of January 1 – Anticipate statewide by July 1.*