

Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation

Regional Talent Strategy Workplan

February 2019

Regional Talent Strategy Workplan

Provided to:

Joe Raso

President & CEO

Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development
Corporation

51 Broadway North, Suite 500

Fargo, ND 58102

701.364.1900

jraso@gfmedc.com

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Section 1: Introduction

Introduction

BACKGROUND

Talent is one of if not the single greatest determinant of economic success today for regions. This includes the availability, productivity, and cost of talent across occupations supporting key industries and coordinated strategies to retain, develop and recruit talent.

In the Greater Fargo Moorhead region, there are numerous initiatives completed, underway, and planned to address various aspects of “workforce” and “talent.” These include the TIP Strategies report from 2015; the current Fueling Our Future fundraising campaign that includes workforce/talent as one of its three major pillars; and a number of ongoing initiatives conducted by the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation (GFMEDC) and/or multiple partners.

As an example of the acknowledgement of how critical talent is to the state’s economic prosperity, the North Dakota Department of Commerce recently commissioned the North Dakota State University to conduct a Workforce Assessment on labor availability and economic impact, with the intention of preparing policy recommendations for consideration by state leadership.

Meanwhile, the GFMEDC, under new leadership, is looking to take stock of key initiatives impacting the future of the Greater Fargo Moorhead region’s economy so that it can focus its staffing and programmatic resources accordingly.

OBJECTIVE

Given all the talent- and workforce-related initiatives underway, the lack of awareness of progress that has been made in this area over the past several years, and the critical importance of these programs to the region’s future economic viability, GFMEDC has asked Ady Advantage to conduct an assessment that will:

1. Identify the key talent- and workforce-related initiatives in the region that are under way or planned, including cataloguing which regional organizations are leading and/or supporting each;
2. Articulate or confirm overall goals for GFMEDC for its talent and workforce initiatives (e.g., supporting existing interstate commerce companies, etc.);
3. Identify existing or planned regional talent initiatives that should be prioritized based on the needs of employers engaged in interstate commerce and identify likely partners and champions of those initiatives.
4. Combine all recommendations into a GFMEDC Regional Talent Workplan with a specific focus on GFMEDC’s role.



Section 2: Employer Input Analysis

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Employer Input Analysis

INTRODUCTION

In order to better understand the talent and workforce challenges within the Fargo-Moorhead region, Ady Advantage leveraged multiple sources of employer input. These included the North Dakota Workforce Survey (2018) of employers, as well as our own survey of employers. This also included one-on-one interviews with employers, as well as employer focus group roundtables. The sum of this input was then synthesized into key employer needs, found at the end of the employer input analysis section.



North Dakota Workforce Survey Analysis

North Dakota Workforce Survey Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The following slides show analysis of data from the most recent North Dakota Workforce Survey (2018). As stated in the workforce report from North Dakota: “Workforce development and relevant education present some of the greatest challenges, as well as opportunities for North Dakota. In June of 2018, The Workforce Development Council (WDC) in partnership with the Greater North Dakota Chamber and NDSU’s Center for the Study of Public Choice and Private Enterprise (PCPE) launched a Workforce survey to deeply understand the workforce challenges of ND employers.”

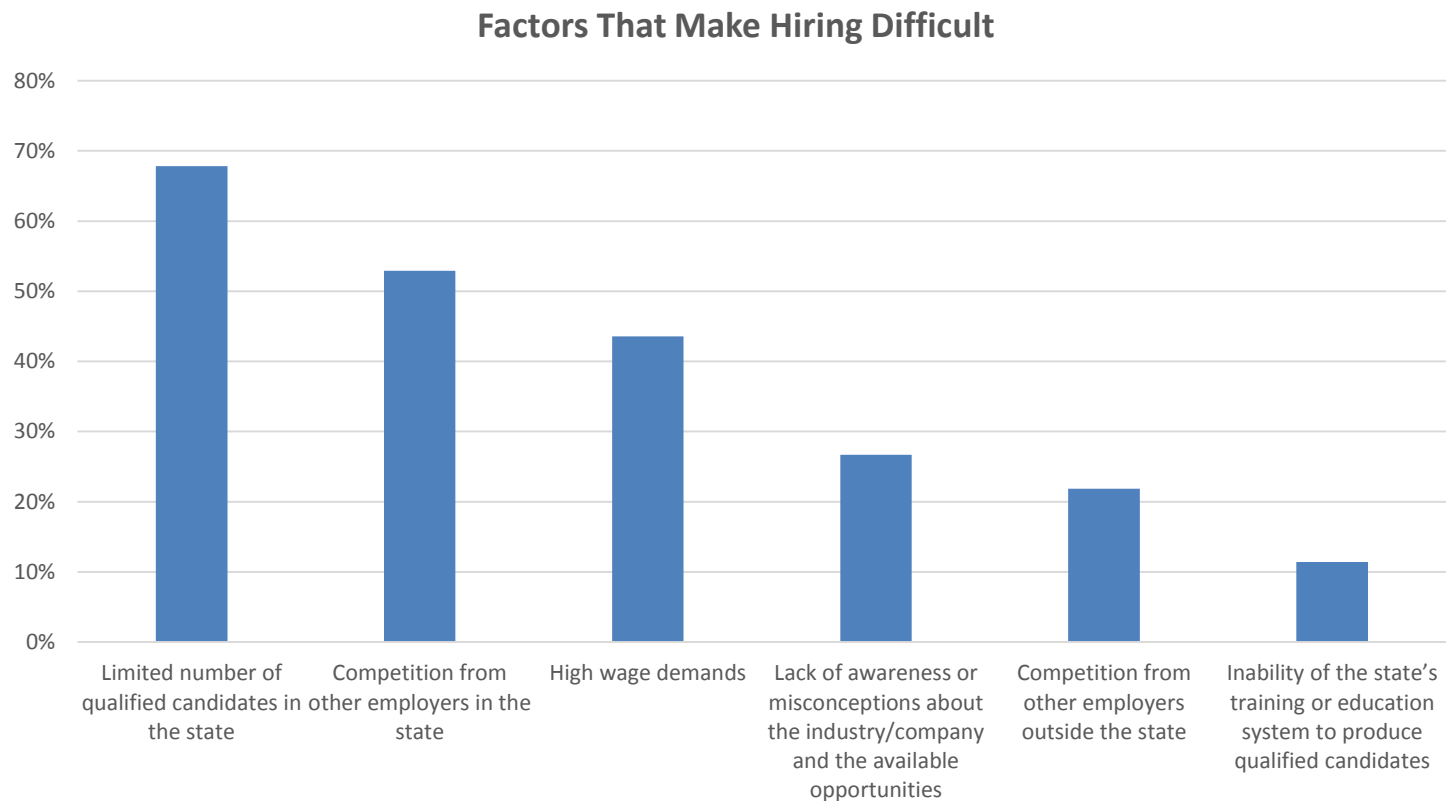
The data analyzed by Ady Advantage includes employer responses from the 7-county region on the North Dakota side of Greater Fargo’s laborshed (Grand Forks, Steele, Traill, Barnes, Stutsman, Cass and Richland). A selection of the questions from this state workforce survey was also utilized in the Ady Advantage Employer Survey found in the section following this one.

North Dakota Workforce Survey Analysis

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE SURVEY

Q1: What factors make hiring workers in key occupations difficult?

The majority of employers surveyed identified the limited number of qualified candidates in the state as the top challenge, with nearly 7 out of 10 employers citing this factor. Also highly cited by employers was competition from other employers in the state (over 5 out of 10 employers) and high wage demands (over 4 out of 10 employers).



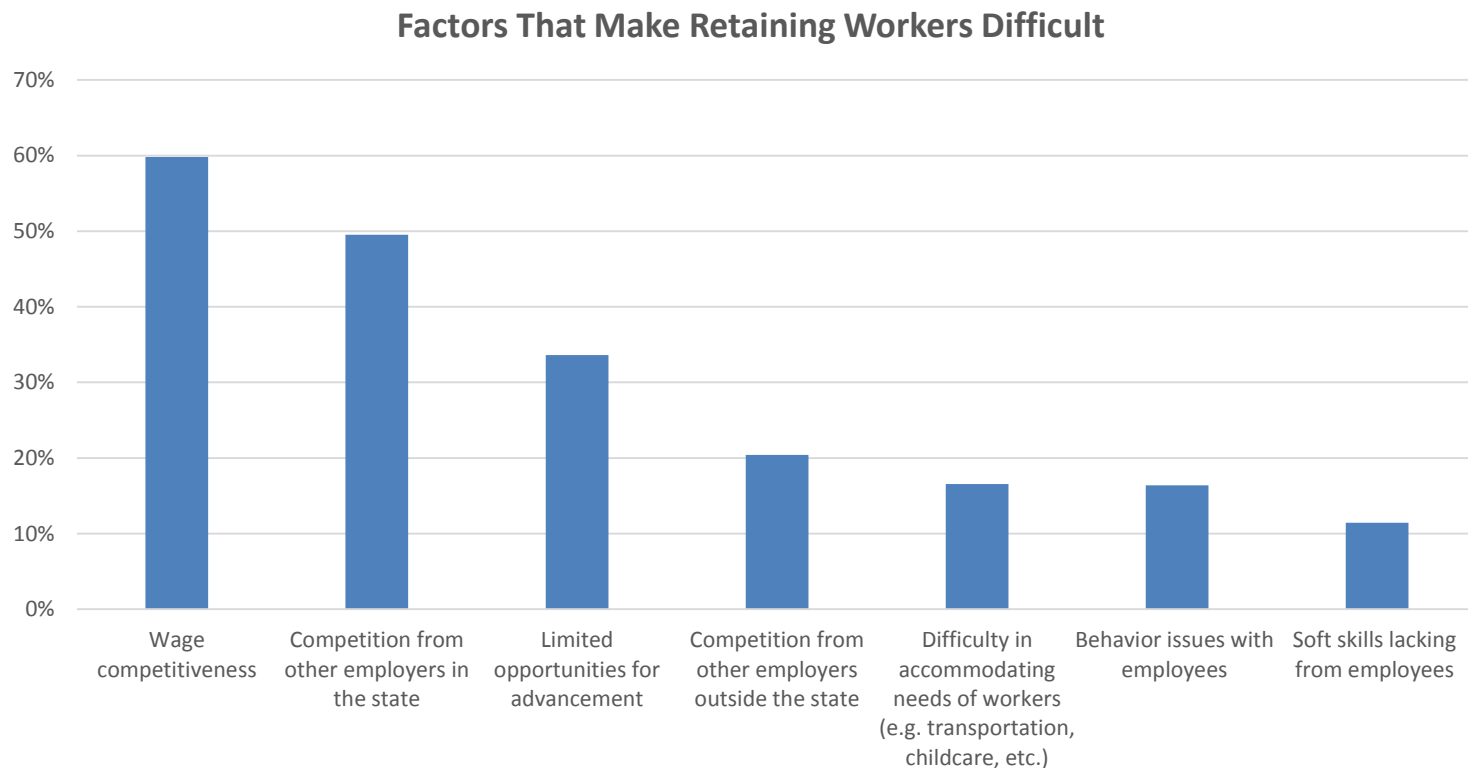
Source: North Dakota Workforce Survey

North Dakota Workforce Survey Analysis

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE SURVEY

Q2: What factors make retaining workers in key occupations difficult?

The majority of employers surveyed identified wage competitiveness as the primary factor that makes retaining workers difficult, with 6 out of 10 employers citing this challenge. Also highly cited was competition from other employers in the state (5 in 10 employers), and limited opportunities for advancement (over 3 in 10 employers).



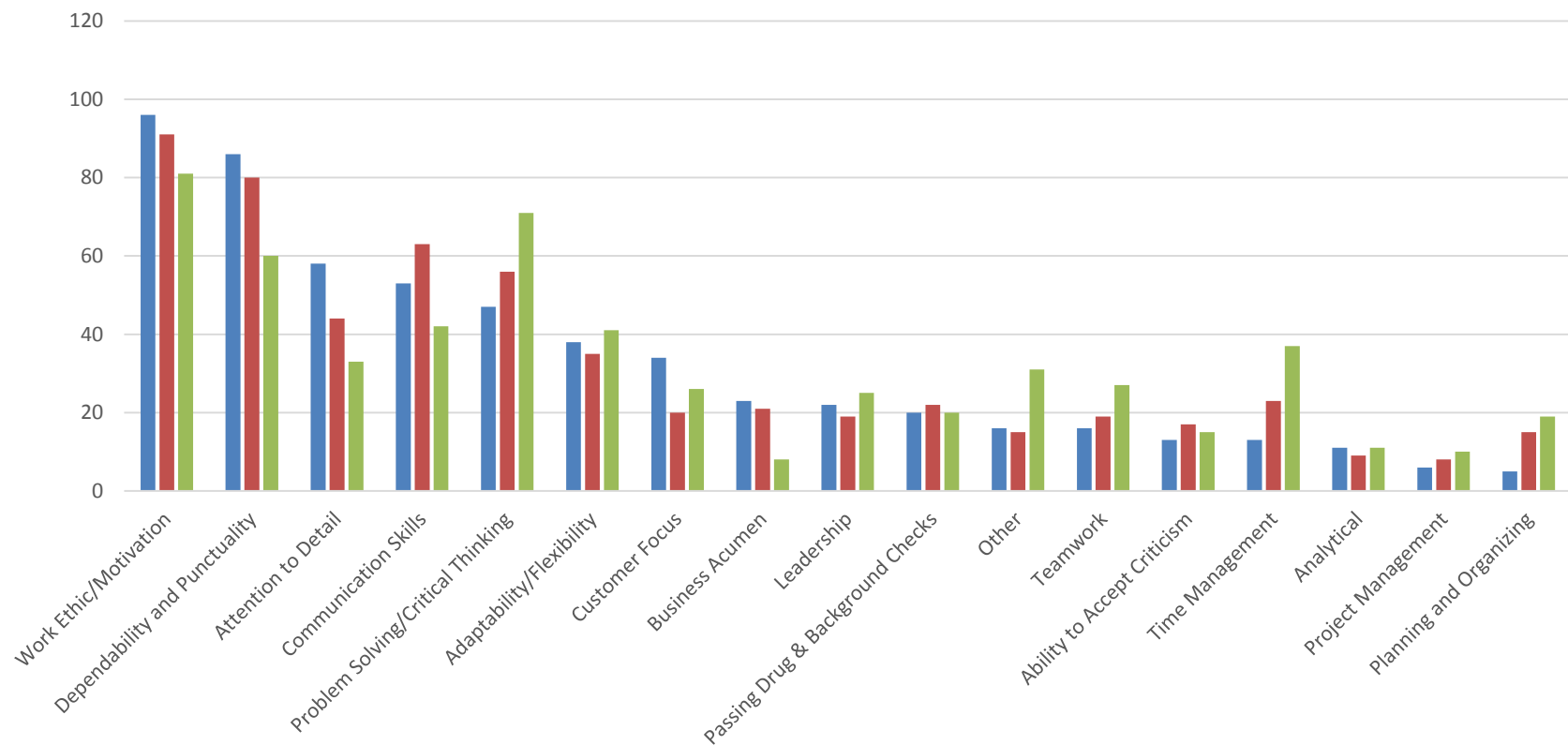
Source: North Dakota Workforce Survey

North Dakota Workforce Survey Analysis

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE SURVEY

Q3: What are the top three critical soft skills/workplace skills relevant to your workforce needs that you are having the most difficulty in identifying in new or potential employees?

Work ethic/motivation was the frequently cited critical soft skill/workplace skill identified by employers to be lacking in new or potential employees, followed by dependability and punctuality, attention to detail, communication skills, and problem solving/critical thinking.



Source: North Dakota Workforce Survey

■ #1 Workplace Skill ■ #2 Workplace Skill ■ #3 Workplace Skill

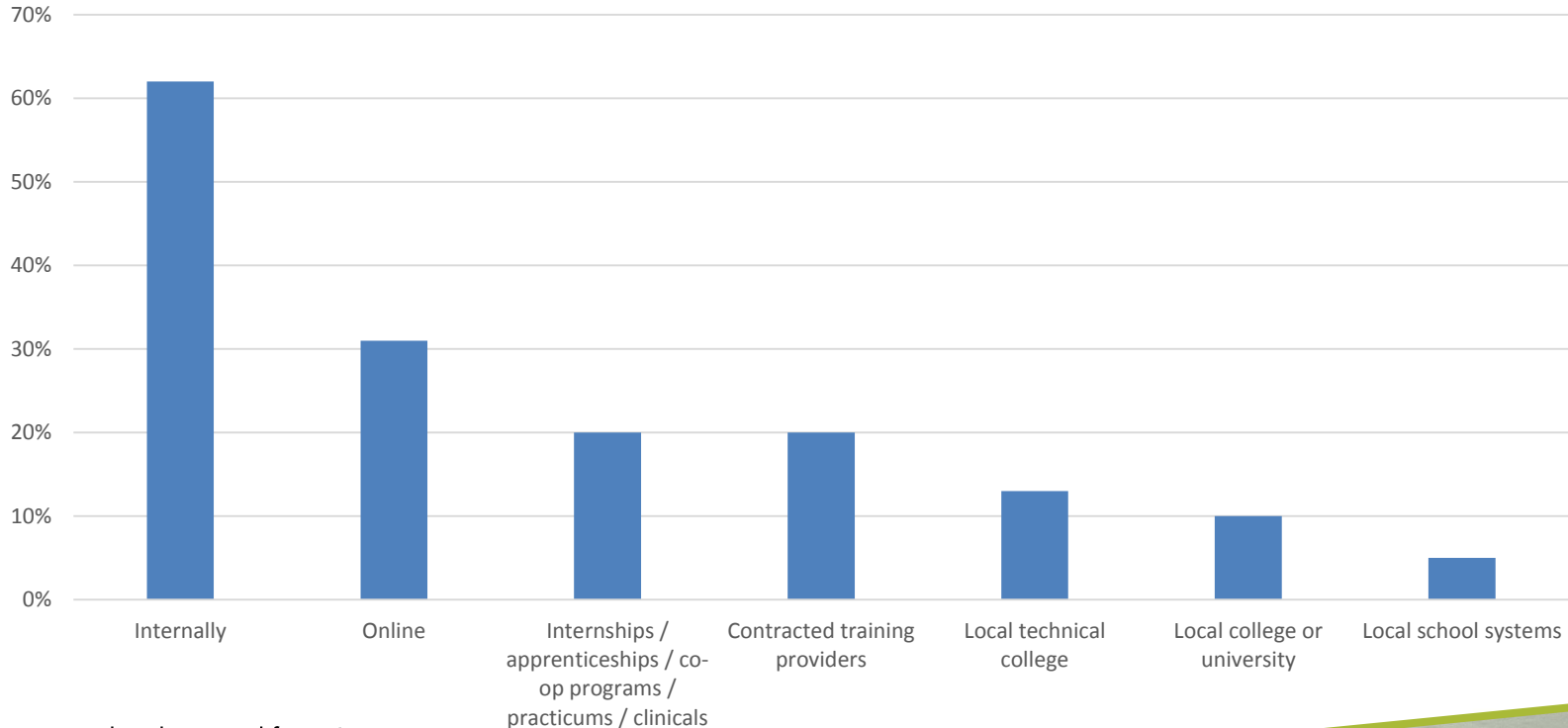
North Dakota Workforce Survey Analysis

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE SURVEY

Q4: Which methods do you utilize to train your employees?

Unsurprisingly, employers most frequently cited internal training as the most common method of training employees, with 6 out of 10 citing this method. Other methods commonly cited was online (3 out of 10 employers), internships/apprenticeships/co-op programs/practicums/clinical (2 out of 10 employers), and contracted training providers (2 out of 10 employers).

Methods Utilized to Train Employees



Source: North Dakota Workforce Survey

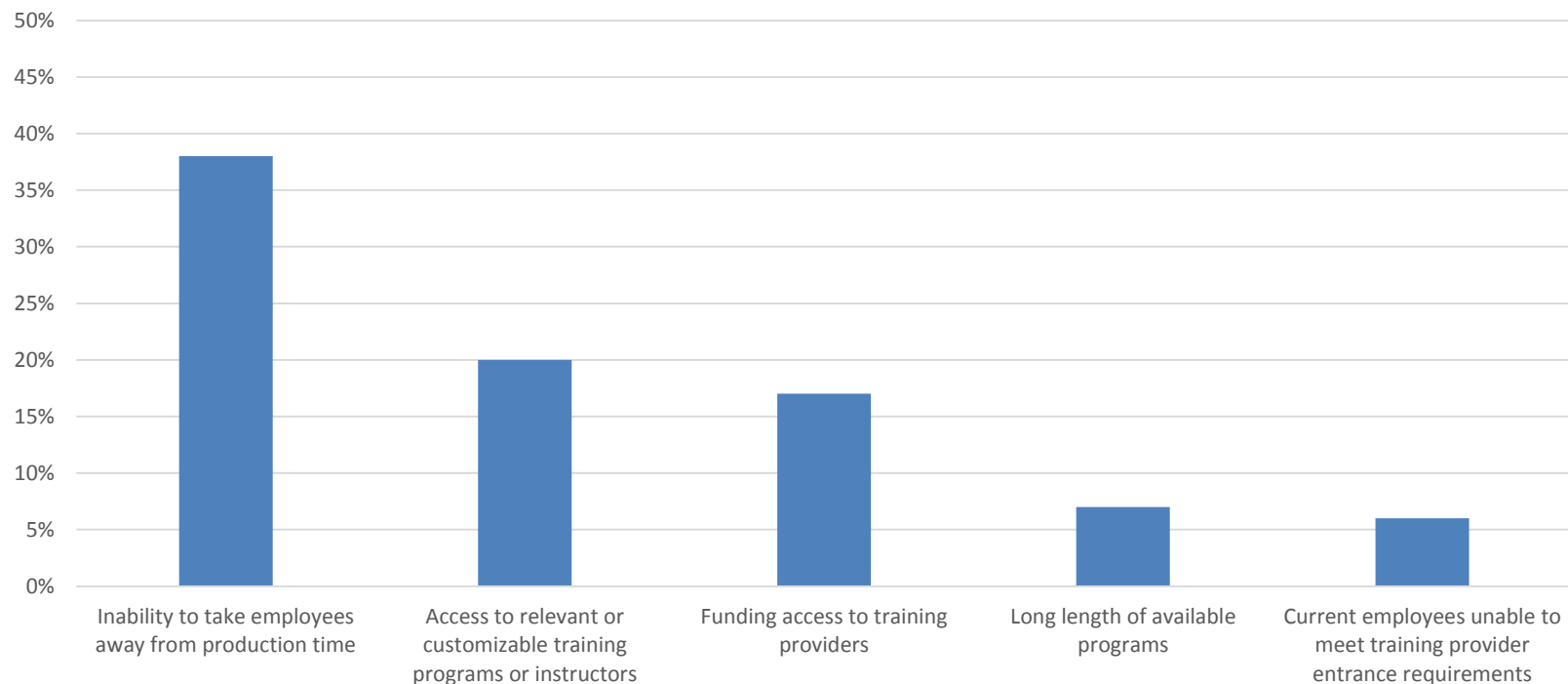
North Dakota Workforce Survey Analysis

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE SURVEY

Q5: What factors make it difficult to train your employees?

The inability to take employees away from production time was the most frequently cited challenge in training employees, with nearly 4 out of 10 employers citing this challenge. Employers also identified as challenging factors were access to relevant or customizable training programs or instructors (2 out of 10 employers) and funding access to training providers (nearly 2 out of 10 employers).

Factors That Make Training Your Employees Difficult



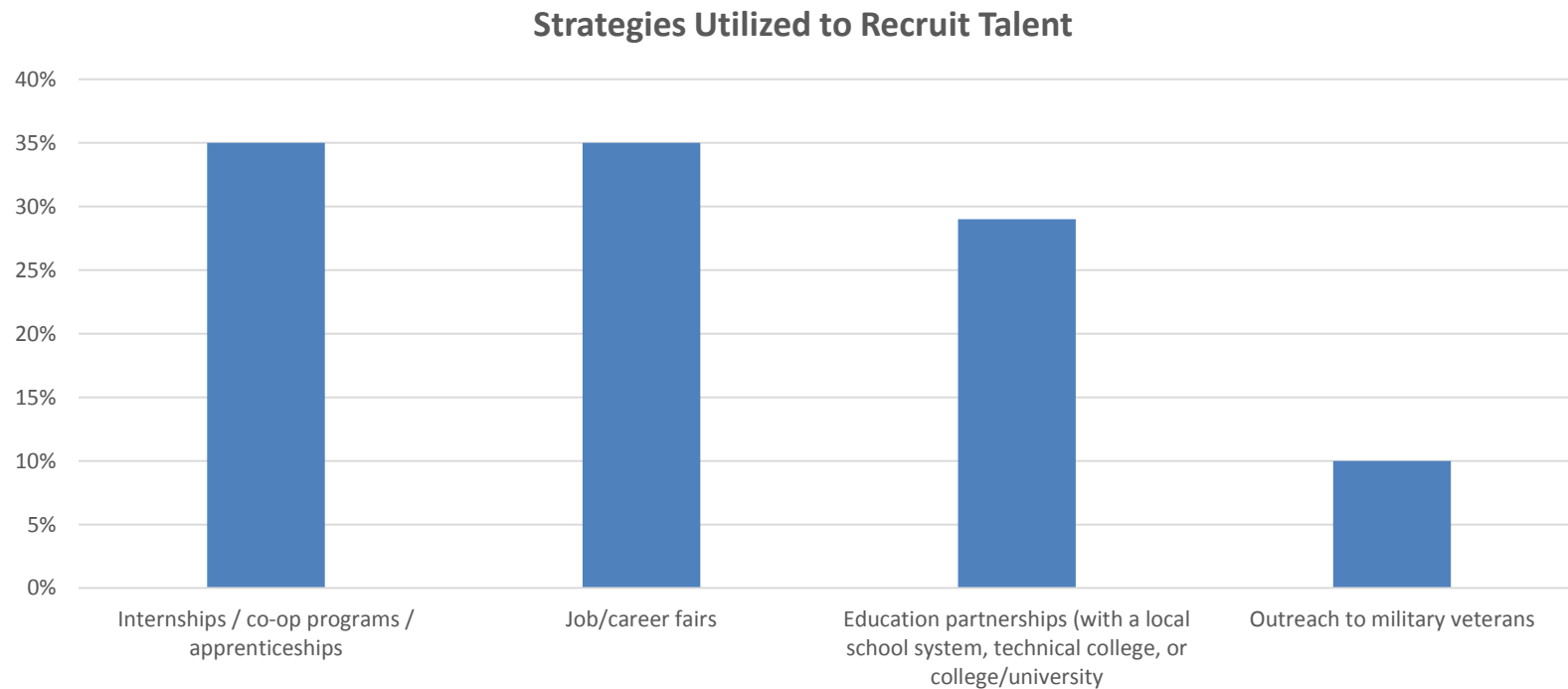
Source: North Dakota Workforce Survey

North Dakota Workforce Survey Analysis

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE SURVEY

Q6: In addition to advertisements, what strategies do you utilize to recruit talent?

Internships/co-op programs/apprenticeships and job/career fairs were the most frequently cited recruitment methods, with nearly 3.5 out of 10 employers citing both these methods. This was closely followed by education partnerships (with a local school system, technical college, or college/university) at nearly 3 out of 10 employers. 1 out of 10 employers utilized outreach to military veterans.



Source: North Dakota Workforce Survey

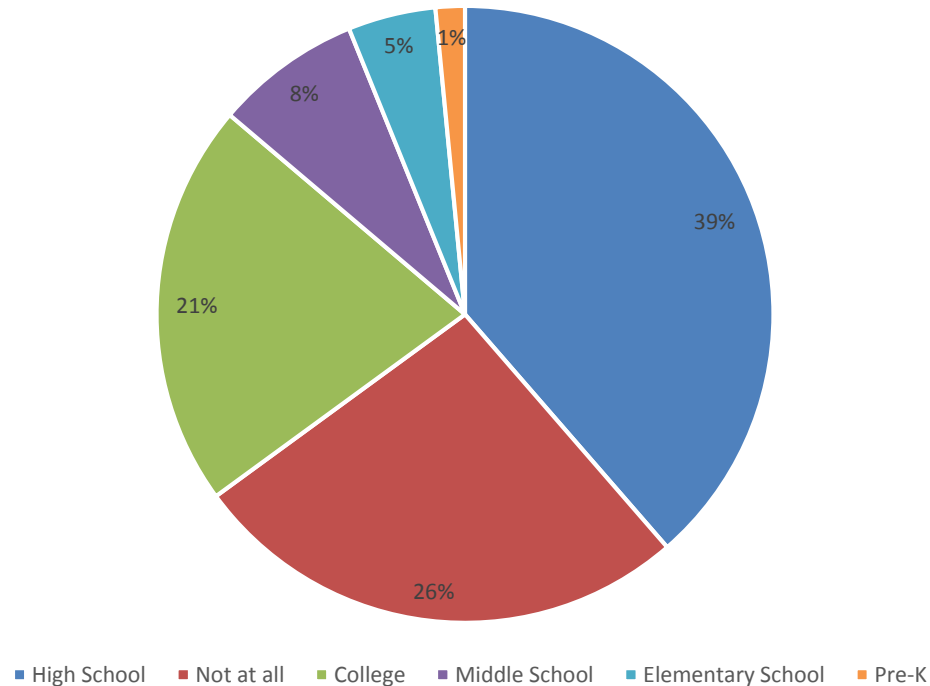
North Dakota Workforce Survey Analysis

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE SURVEY

Q7: What is the youngest age that your company targets for career awareness?

High school was the most common youngest age bracket that companies targeted individuals for career awareness, with 4 out of 10 employers identifying this. About a quarter of employers do not target any age bracket for career awareness, and 2 in 10 employers only target once individuals are in college. The remaining 16% of employers target individuals even younger, spread across middle school, elementary school and Pre-K in that order.

Youngest Age Targeted for Career Awareness



Source: North Dakota Workforce Survey



Ady Advantage Employer Survey

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Ady Advantage conducted employer interviews and focus groups on-site during the week of December 10, 2018. The employers providing input were those engaged in interstate commerce (primary sector). The purpose of these interviews and focus groups was to receive insightful input and perspective from important employers relating to the challenges and opportunities within the Fargo region, specifically as they relate to talent. As part of these interviews and focus groups, all participants were provided a brief survey to fill out. Some of the questions asked on this survey were derived from the North Dakota Workforce Survey (2018), in order to validate and strengthen hypothesis developed from the statewide survey. The results of the Ady Advantage employer survey can be found on the following slides.

The following individuals from the following companies below participated in interviews and focus groups that contributed to our analysis.

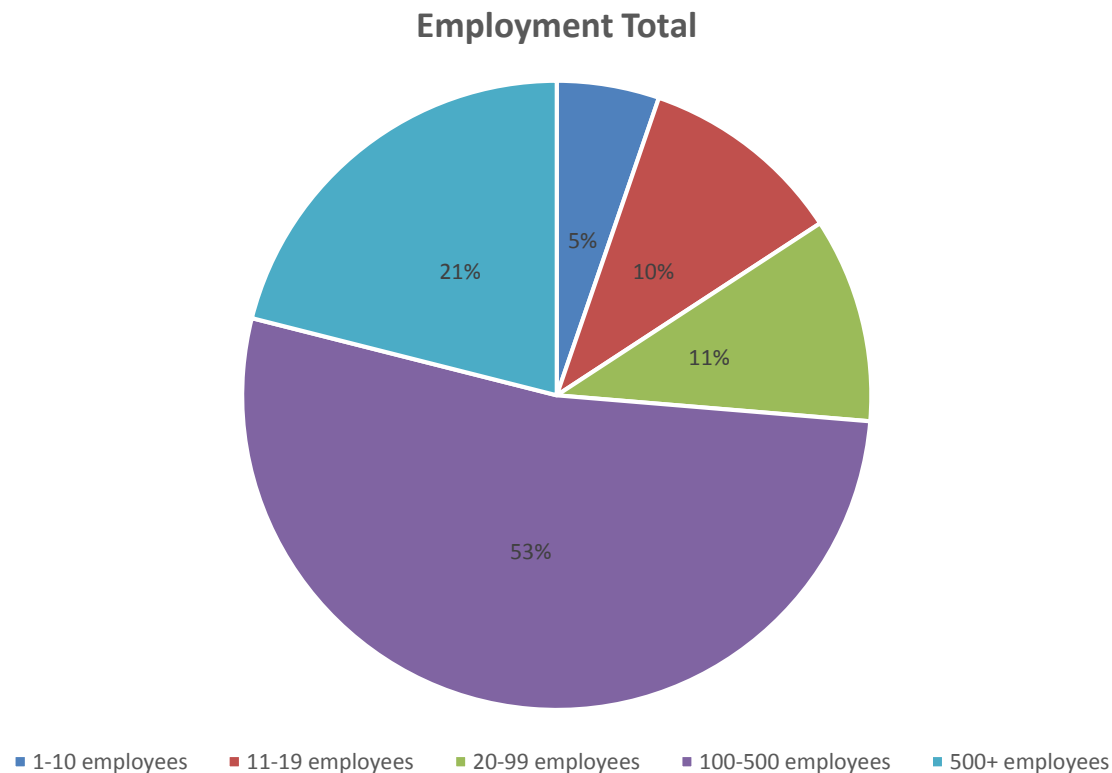
Organization	Name
Employers	
Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota	Samantha Mohr
Caterpillar Remanufacturing Drivetrain	Carla Hanson
CNH Industrial America, LLC.	Amy Possehl
ComDel Innovation	Jim Alhrecht
Discovery Benefits	Kurtis Karn
Doosan Bobcat	Brenda Richman Amanda
Integreon	Julie Laufenberg
Job Service ND	Brenda Cornell Julie Rostberg
John Deere Electronic Solutions	Denise Geffre
Korber Medipak Systems	Jessica Petrick
M State	G.L. Tucker
Noridan Healthcare Solutions, LLC.	Talia Nelson
OmniByte Technology	Ray Berry
Rapat Corporation	Tiffany Eli
Sycorr	Jeremy Neuharth
Trail King Industries	Perry Lubbers
UWCC	Ahmed Shiil
WEX Health	Sarah Sakrison

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

ADY ADVANTAGE EMPLOYER INPUT SURVEY

Q1: How many people do you employ in the Greater Fargo-Moorhead region?

The majority of employers surveyed identified that they employ between 100-500 employees in the Fargo-Moorhead region, with half stating this. One-fifth identified total employment of 500+ employees, and the rest of employers were split fairly equally between the other choices.



Source: Ady Advantage Employer Survey

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

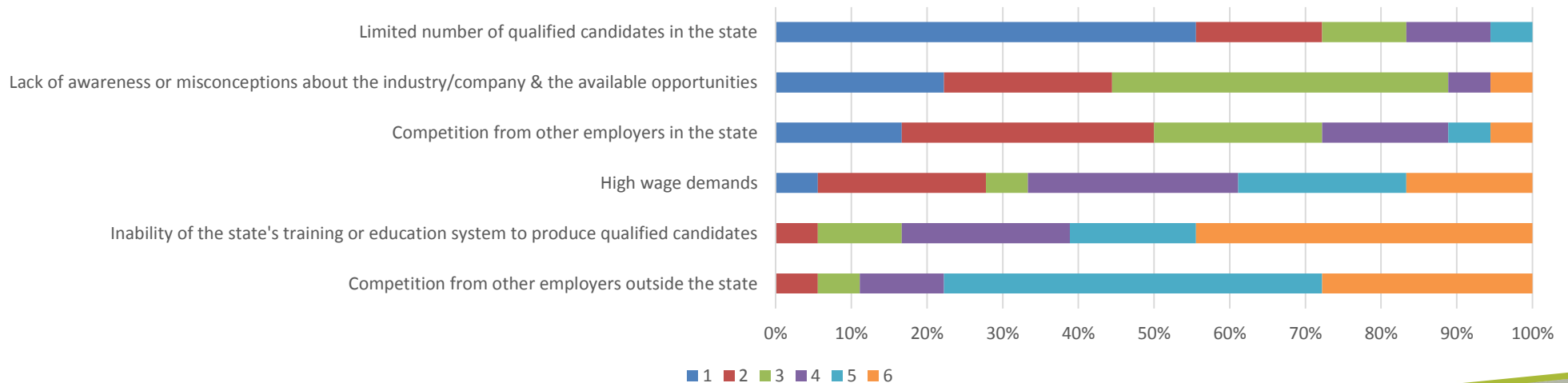
ADY ADVANTAGE EMPLOYER INPUT SURVEY

Q2: Please rank the following factors that make hiring workers a challenge for your organization.

On a scale of 1 being the most challenging and 6 being the least challenging, employers identified the limited number of qualified candidates in the state as being the most challenging factor.

	Limited number of qualified candidates in the state	Lack of awareness or misconceptions about the industry/company & the available opportunities	Competition from other employers in the state	High wage demands	Inability of the state's training or education system to produce qualified candidates	Competition from other employers outside the state
Weighted Average Difficulty	1.944	2.556	2.778	3.889	4.833	4.889

Factors That Make Hiring Workers a Challenge



Source: Ady Advantage Employer Survey

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

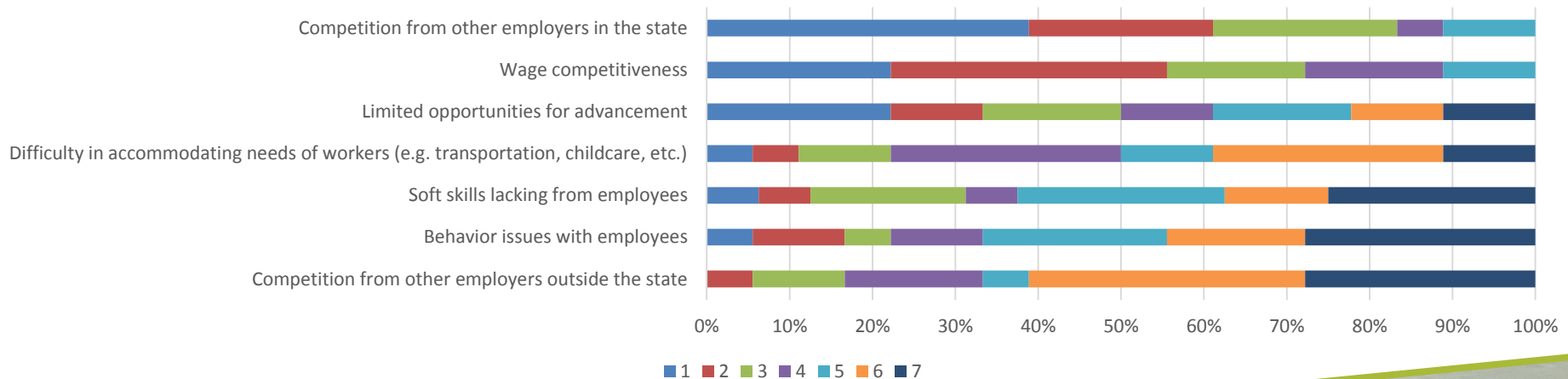
ADY ADVANTAGE EMPLOYER INPUT SURVEY

Q3: Please rank the following factors that make retaining workers a challenge for your organization.

On a scale of 1 being the most challenging and 7 being the least challenging, employers identified the competition from other employers in the state as the most challenging in retaining workers, followed relatedly by wage competitiveness.

	Competition from other employers in the state	Wage competitiveness	Limited opportunities for advancement	Difficulty in accommodating needs of workers (e.g. transportation, childcare, etc.)	Soft skills lacking from employees	Behavior issues with employees	Competition from other employers outside the state
Weighted Average Difficulty	2.278	2.611	3.667	4.611	4.941	4.944	5.333

Factors That Make Retaining Workers a Challenge for your Organization



Source: Ady Advantage Employer Survey

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

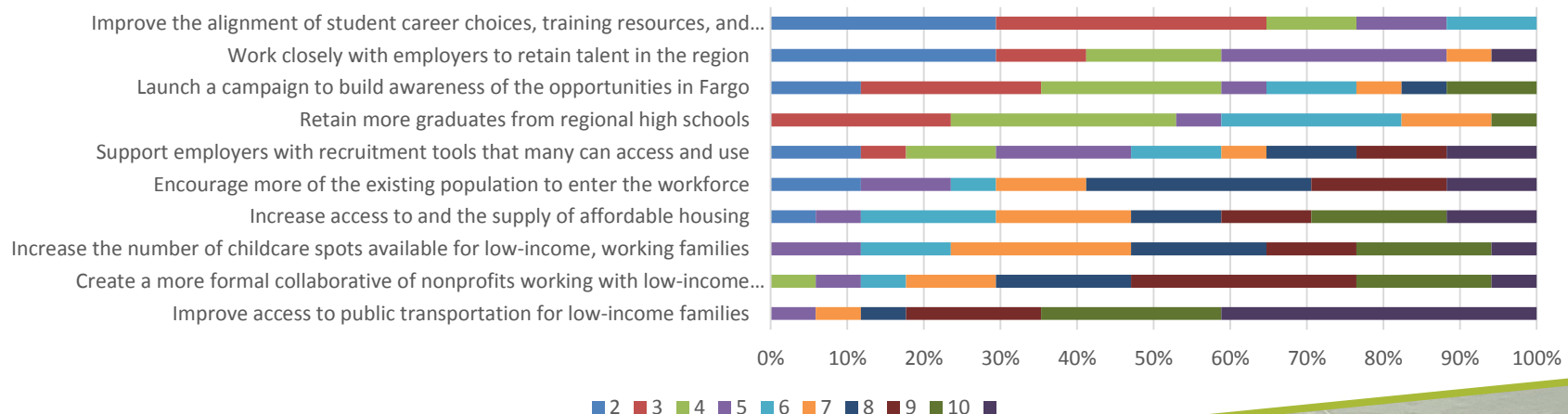
ADY ADVANTAGE EMPLOYER INPUT SURVEY

Q4: Please rank the following strategies that the Greater Fargo-Moorhead Economic Development Corporation should prioritize in regards to addressing the talent challenges and opportunities in the region.

On a scale of 1 being the top priority and 10 being the least prioritized, employers identified improving the alignment of student career choices, training resources, and industry needs as being the strategy that should be most prioritized.

	Improve the alignment of student career choices, training resources, and industry needs	Work closely with employers to retain talent in the region	Launch a campaign to build awareness of the opportunities in Fargo	Retain more graduates from regional high schools	Support employers with recruitment tools that many can access and use	Encourage more of the existing population to enter the workforce	Increase access to and the supply of affordable housing	Increase the number of childcare spots available for low-income, working families	Create a more formal collaborative of nonprofits working with low-income clients around income stability	Improve access to public transportation for low-income families
Weighted Average Difficulty	2.411	3.176	3.941	4	5.176	6.235	6.765	6.824	7.176	8.222

Strategies to Address Talent Challenges and Opportunities



Source: Ady Advantage Employer Survey

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

ADY ADVANTAGE EMPLOYER INPUT SURVEY

Q5: How well do you think organizations in the Greater Fargo-Moorhead region work together and partner to address the talent issues within the region?

Employers generally found that organizations within the region could work more collaboratively and with more directed focus towards addressing talent issues within the region. Many employers noted a desire to address these talent issues, but that the labor shortage and fierce competition made it hard to effectively work together as partners.

Responses

Strengths

- Somewhat well in certain industries. Example - FM area contact center group.
- When there are established working relationships, I believe organizations partner well, i.e. job service, NDSCS.
- Strong collaboration - the GFMEDC and the Chamber do a good job of trying to promote. Emerging Prairie has also been a positive force.
- I feel everyone works well toward the same goal given our similar workforce constraints.
- There is a collaboration of working together. It could benefit from a regular meeting to maintain momentum when hiring is not a high priority.

Needs Improvement

- They may be starting to work in this direction, but I think it is more everyone for themselves.
- Could use some improvements, sometimes lack follow through and continuing efforts.
- Fair. Many have and share the same issues/challenges. It is not uncommon for organizations to discuss openly, however many times there is no action.
- I believe there is a lot of ideas but too many. I would like more focus on a few things done well.
- It seems there are many initiatives in pockets that could be better coordinated. Initiatives lose steam over time.
- Can be better.
- Several surveys were completed and groups were formed to address those needs/outcomes. I think some were successful - "Frostival" for example, however the daycare and housing issues weren't completely addressed.
- In the past 5 years, we have had to collaborate more and compete less, but it's very difficult to do when the talent shortage is so high.
- In some cases well, but in other cases we are in direct competition for top local talent.
- It is getting better, but we are all in competition for talent so I don't think we really work together.
- Depends - sometimes it seems like collaboration, sometimes like competition. The River should not be a barrier.
- I haven't seen much partnering. Any partnering that has been organized by a third party such as the EDC.
- Well, but one has to invest the time.
- There are a few opportunities through University meet and greet, and when a company is closing, but I'd like to see more networking, roundtable discussions and opportunities.

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

ADY ADVANTAGE EMPLOYER INPUT SURVEY

Q6: If the Greater Fargo-Moorhead Economic Development Corporation had to focus its efforts on one talent strategy or program, what type of program would provide the most value to your organization?

Employers identified a number of priorities for the region to focus on as it relates to talent, clustering into four categories; 1) retention of talent, especially making the youth of the region aware of opportunities locally, 2) increasing partnership and collaboration, 3) recruitment and attraction of new talent to the region, and 4) a focus on skilled trades development.

Responses

Retention

- Try to educate the younger population about all the opportunities available in the Fargo-Moorhead area and perhaps that need is being met with the Health, Tech and Trade Expo.
- Aligning students with careers - we have so many kids go to 4 years of school but there are great opportunities if you don't.
- Outreach into grade, middle and high schools on awareness and preparation to understand potential career paths post the education experience.
- Retaining high school and college graduates in the region.
- Help employers retain talent - best practices around career laddering/employing new Americans to other populations.
- Employee retention, solving language barriers for skilled labor.

Partnerships & Collaboration

- A candidate search database. Also a platform that could let candidates know more about regional employers.
- Working with business to identify the skill gaps and how to be more forward so business can expand and grow.
- Workforce partnerships - encourage employers to work together on local issues such as wages and benefits.
- Collaboration of organizations.
- Working with our local colleges on updating their curriculum to meet the needs of businesses.

Recruitment

- Recruit North Dakotans back to North Dakota/Fargo. Communicate more what is great today about Fargo. Provide help for employees to do that too.
- Attract high caliber talent to the region.
- Recruiting to Fargo-Moorhead.

Skilled Trades

- Training for skill sets - software coding, Word/Excel, etc.
- Skilled trade - CNC - welding.

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

ADY ADVANTAGE EMPLOYER INPUT SURVEY

Q7: What do you believe is driving talent scarcity in the Fargo-Moorhead region?

Employers identified a number of causes driving talent scarcity in the region, with many identifying that industry and job growth in the region has been strong, but that population growth and the number of workers available has not kept up. In addition, employers noted a significant outflow of talent from the region, often due to people (especially young people) desiring to live somewhere more urban.

Responses

Industry Growth Outpacing Population

- Growth. More tech starts-ups needing talent than before. More opportunities therefor exist. Recruit/communicate this and provide guidance.
- Job growth has outpaced the workforce. Retaining talent we have is critical, and providing job readiness training will help others join the workforce.
- Growing, companies needing workers with skills, not just a body. We need to bring more people to the area and make sure our community is one people want to believe in.
- Industry/jobs growing at a faster pace than population.
- More jobs, than people to fill them. We can't leave anyone behind.
- So many companies are hiring the same talent - we need more workers in general, but especially educated/skilled.
- Lack of workers with the skill mix our employers are seeking - whether these skills are better defined or recruitment efforts are out reached to other areas - selling North Dakota is a challenge.
- The number one thing is lack of sources for talent. There is simply not enough locally to begin with. I think we need to train up, show opportunities, and attract migration in.
- Sheer numbers, lack of talent.

Talent Outflow

- The Minneapolis market is driving a lot of our talent away. Making sure people are aware of our businesses and opportunities.
- Talent leaving the region after education process. Also the difficulty attracting talent to the region from other regions.
- Most younger people want to leave our state - we need to educate them on opportunities that exist here.
- Fargo is made fun of as a place to live. The idea/perception of living in Fargo is not correct. Changing the story of Fargo which I know we are already working on.

Other

- High demand for talent. Negative perceptions of our community. Lack of interest in technical trades, skilled welding, assembly, CNC.
- It depends in some cases people are ready to commit to work so early in their careers, in other cases its wages at mid level and above.
- Childcare/transportation.
- Knowledge of opportunities, a drive to obtain a 4-year degree when tech training could provide the same or more for an annual income with less debt. Allowing high school coops in manufacturing to allow students/parents visibility of opportunities.
- Competition for same skill set with fewer candidates coming from local tech schools. Need more intense focus on great opportunities in manufacturing sector.
- I think the talent is within the community, there needs to be strong consistent exposure and marketing to yield consistent results.

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

ADY ADVANTAGE EMPLOYER INPUT SURVEY

Q8: Please identify the top five statements that are most true about the Fargo region as it relates to talent.

Employers overwhelmingly identified that high-demand jobs and that students are predominantly choosing to enter four-degree programs as being the most true statements about the Fargo region. Also frequently identified was that the level of career awareness and knowledge of regional employees was lacking and that more alignment was needed among resource providers that serve underrepresented populations.

High-demand jobs require a technical degree or lower	Students are predominantly choosing to enter four-year degree programs	Level of career awareness and knowledge of regional employees lacking	More alignment is needed among resource providers that serve underrepresented populations	Students have access to career exploration opportunities	Fargo is advertising itself as a destination for talent and it is helping	A common set of goals is needed for the resource provider ecosystem	Access to childcare is a barrier for many employees
26	22	17	12	8	8	8	8

Two-three years retention is a difficult barrier to overcome	Climate makes retention difficult	Lack of a clear message on talent is distributed by the region	Your own marketing efforts are being supported by the region and its partners	Access to reliable transportation is a barrier to employees' stability in work or working altogether	Access to workforce housing is low in the region	There is a subset of the population who can work but doesn't unless they are paid at a certain level
7	7	6	6	4	3	1

Source: Ady Advantage Employer Survey

Note: The above statements derive from the 2015 Regional Workforce Study.

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

ADY ADVANTAGE EMPLOYER INPUT SURVEY

Q9: Do you believe the region and partners within it is doing enough to support improving the talent pipeline and address talent challenges? If not, where are the gaps and what can be done to support change in each?

Employers identified a widely varying number of areas of focus for the Fargo region to improve it's efforts towards talent. Frequently mentioned were the need to promote the trades as career routes, increase collaboration between partners, and to place a greater emphasis on follow-through of initiative.

Responses

- 2-3 year retention: we need more career path options and open engagement with the employer. High demand jobs require a high school diploma, but don't always pay enough to support that worker.
- I'd like to see the marketing for recruiting shift to focus the strategy around current tools. Such as Facebook, Twitter, hosting events, networking, LinkedIn. We need to get more of a tech presence.
- The workforce is changing as skill requirements are changing - not sure we are keeping up. Housing seems to keep going up but wages do not follow for most.
- We need continued effort and follow-through. We have great initiatives and thoughts but putting them into action and seeing results.
- Some efforts at state level promote student career opportunities. There is very little support locally to promote startups to utilize interns. Promoting Fargo is not enough. I feel we have overcome the stigma. Now we need tools to connect with resources so they can filter out to naturally opportunities and focus on Fargo or North Dakota.
- I don't know as much. We have changed to a virtual office and hire anywhere in the US. We have not focused on the local talent much.
- I think we know what needs to be done, but changing the perception is hard.
- Workforce collaboration may help.
- Applicants don't know what they don't know. Opportunities are available, they just don't know where to look/start sometimes.
- Education for children - middle school through high school -on trades.
- We can always do more. How to connect businesses to make them aware of how they can work with others to impact change. Focus on common issues/needs to create a team and synergy to accomplish specific goals.
- Try to get into the high school to educate the kids or offer a training session to the counselors.
- More collaboration between 4-year and 2-year schools. If they drop out of a 4-year, could they go to a 2-year school that would fit there interests.
- More involvement is needed to address the barriers.
- There are some initiatives in place to support the issues you listed. Maybe it would be beneficial to go a little deeper for example - students have been invited to attend manufacturing tours. At some point we need to get parents buy-in as well to support the idea of pursuing a manufacturing trade.
- Education of parents/teachers on benefits of vocational/technical trades. It would be helpful to have more resources to highlight our area to potential hires - organized community tours/benefits/preview events, etc.
- Competition can be a barrier/issue with resource providers. We have splintered work in housing/childcare/transportation. Employers are going to have to contribute/put skin in the game.
- More work could/should be done.
- High schools need to do a better job of education students on tech school degrees and the opportunities in the manufacturing sector.

Ady Advantage Employer Input Survey Analysis

ADY ADVANTAGE EMPLOYER INPUT SURVEY

Q10: If money were not a limiting factor, what is one talent initiative, once implemented, that would most significantly impact the talent needs in the Fargo region?

Employers identified a varying number of initiatives or areas of focus for the Fargo region to concentrate its efforts on. Education and training, and marketing and awareness (both of the opportunities in the region to prospective talent outside the region, and of opportunities within the region to existing talent) were the most frequently identified.

Responses

Education & Training

- Education/Training
- Education/Training. In tech it would be nice to see more of a presence of tech certification programs such as the guild or the prime based out of the cities.
- Get more students locally to join the sciences (STEM) for us we need even more CS & CE talent today and in the foreseeable future. We lack 5-7 year experienced staff. So we must build them for college.
- Revamping the education system beginning in grade/middle school. Assess options to integrate career pathing and targeted curriculum to individual aptitudes and interests. Partner with business in the region to provide experiential learning and job experiences
- Tech school training for new Americans willing to advance their skill level.

Marketing & Awareness

- Awareness of good paying jobs that do not require a college degree.
- I feel career awareness is maybe one of those items. Outside of those items that may help with in-migration. The challenge becomes getting and helping them here.
- We need to make Fargo a fun place for young people right out of college. If we can get them there, they'll meet people, raise families and stay.
- Career mapping/awareness for students. National awareness of quality of life and benefits of living in this area. Comprehensive education of parents/guidance counselors/teachers on available careers in the trades and skilled positions. We need a comprehensive state STEM strategy - student outcomes.
- Support in recruiting people to the Fargo-Moorhead area at lower levels.

Other

- Getting people into the region. Discounts on housing/childcare, pay to more. Incentives to move to the area.
- More partnerships between schools and businesses to show students what opportunities there are.
- Childcare/transportation
- Great dollars to support the growth of high school coops at a skilled position. Items such as transportation, PPE and subsidizing wages. Funding to be used for manufacturing training as a tool for growth.
- Career laddering with upward mobility for all population groups.
- Recruiting directly out of high schools.



Key Employer Needs

Key Employer Needs

INTRODUCTION

The following section contains key employer needs in the Fargo-Moorhead region, as it relates to talent and workforce. These key needs were identified primarily through feedback and input from the employer interviews and employer focus groups conducted by Ady Advantage during the on-site during the week of December 10, 2018. The purpose of these interviews and focus groups was to receive insightful input and perspective from important employers relating to the challenges and opportunities within the Fargo region, specifically as they relate to talent. The input from these one-on-one interviews and focus groups was then supplemented by input from the North Dakota Workforce Survey (2018) and the Ady Advantage Employer Survey. These findings are aggregated together and analyzed into the key employer needs found in the following pages. Full employer focus group and interview notes can be found in the appendix.

Key Employer Needs

KEY EMPLOYER NEEDS

Key Need #1: Increased awareness of regional employers by local audiences.

This key need identified itself in several ways. Employers noted that within the region there is a lack of awareness and/or misconceptions about the industries/companies in the region and opportunities that exist within them. There is also a need for connecting students to local employers so that they choose to stay in the Fargo region after graduation.

Responses

- There is a Manufacturing Week for high school students to tour manufacturing facilities, but there should also be a focus on educating parents and guidance counselors.
- Educators in the Industry program is great, but need to scale that program.
- There is still some stigma around manufacturing in the area, but improving.
- The region needs to do a better job of exposing the kids and students to the types of jobs that they can find after graduating and if they stay.
- Try to educate the younger population about all the opportunities available in the Fargo-Moorhead area and perhaps that need is being met with the Health, Tech and Trade Expo.
- Outreach into grade, middle and high schools on awareness and preparation to understand potential career paths post the education experience.
- Most younger people want to leave our state - we need to educate them on opportunities that exist here.
- Knowledge of opportunities, a drive to obtain a 4-year degree when tech training could provide the same or more for an annual income with less debt. Allowing high school coops in manufacturing to allow students/parents visibility of opportunities.
- Get more students locally to join the sciences (STEM).
- Comprehensive education of parents/guidance counselors/teachers on available careers in the trades and skilled positions.

Key Employer Needs

KEY EMPLOYER NEEDS

Key Need #2: Better alignment of employer needs with training resources and educational offerings.

This was ranked as one of the highest priorities for the region to effectively address the talent challenge. Employers would like to see better alignment around training students for the current and future career opportunities that are/will be available in the region. Many employers mentioned a need for skilled trade-type jobs that do not necessarily require a four-year degree.

Responses

- The tech colleges are always present at the table now. Started working more with K-12 more, but they need to become more aligned with the region's priorities.
- Schools need more funding to keep up with changing technologies and automation.
- Tech schools are struggling because people are being pushed go to 4-years.
- There needs to be a good laddering program – not all CNC machinists need a certificate.
- The universities and technical colleges do a good job at outreach, but don't have a universal, coordinated message.
- Aligning students with careers - we have so many kids go to 4 years of school but there are great opportunities if you don't.
- Working with our local colleges on updating their curriculum to meet the needs of businesses.
- More collaboration between 4-year and 2-year schools.
- Partner with business in the region to provide experiential learning and job experiences

Key Employer Needs

KEY EMPLOYER NEEDS

Key Need #3: Community connections for both students and new employees.

Employers identified the need for programs that help connect students and new employees to the community and help them become involved in the community. This creates a level of “stickiness” and helps with employee retention.

Responses

- There should be help available for their family and community integration process.
- People from outside the region who come to it for college won't stay if they don't have something rooting them down afterwards. We need to create connections for them.
- Opportunity to get international students green cards or visas so they can stay after and work.
- Events like roundtables and networking events are good ways to help integrate people into the community.
- Retaining high school and college graduates in the region.
- We need to make Fargo a fun place for young people right out of college. If we can get them there, they'll meet people, raise families and stay.

Key Employer Needs

KEY EMPLOYER NEEDS

Key Need #4: Additional recruitment capacity and awareness building.

The top challenge in hiring workers is the limited number of qualified candidates in the region/state. For this reason, many employers mentioned that a helpful strategy for the region to lead would be a national recruitment campaign to help bring awareness of the opportunities in Fargo and recruit talent. This would allow a more coordinated and effective effort than individual employers spending a lot of time and resources on these types of activities. Some ideas around this included creating marketing tools that could be used by regional employers, videos, a job posting website, etc.

Responses

- The struggle for start-ups is that all resources go to staff, they can't afford recruitment tactics, headhunters, etc. How can we get information about my company out there without my company having to spend thousands of dollars?
- It's difficult to convince professional or highly skilled people to move to the area.
- National awareness of the region needs to be a priority, changing the perception.
- The EDC could use resources to recruit these people to the community. Should target MSP, Chicago, Austin for talent.
- Need to promote Fargo as a tech hub.
- People in their 30's are the best targets to try to recruit to Fargo. The generation that's growing up right now is not afraid of moving around. Fargo is a good place to settle down and raise a family.
- Recruit North Dakotans back to North Dakota/Fargo. Communicate more what is great today about Fargo. Provide help for employees to do that too.
- selling North Dakota is a challenge.
- I'd like to see the marketing for recruiting shift to focus the strategy around current tools. Such as Facebook, Twitter, hosting events, networking, LinkedIn. We need to get more of a tech presence.
- It would be helpful to have more resources to highlight our area to potential hires - organized community tours/benefits/preview events, etc.
- National awareness of quality of life and benefits of living in this area.

Key Employer Needs

KEY EMPLOYER NEEDS

Key Need #5: Barrier removal for unemployed and/or underrepresented populations.

The top challenge in hiring workers is the limited number of qualified candidates in the region/state. Employers discussed that the region has existing populations that could fill these job openings; however, there are barriers that might prevent these populations from working, including access to transportation, access to childcare, language barriers, etc. There is also a perception of a lack of coordinated effort and/or alignment between resource providers that serve these underrepresented populations.

Responses

- Childcare availability and quality is a challenge, especially 24 hour operations, weekends and when kids are sick.
- Childcare is a huge issue, single parents can't afford childcare, affordability and availability
- Transportation – there are limited bus services and stops; however, there's not a big enough need for employees to add additional stops. This may be holding people back from applying.
- Employee retention, solving language barriers for skilled labor.
- Housing seems to keep going up but wages do not follow for most.
- Getting people into the region. Discounts on housing/childcare, pay to more. Incentives to move to the area.



Section 3: Talent Scorecard Matrix

Talent Scorecard Matrix

INTRODUCTION

Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation compiled all talent strategies that are currently underway in the Greater Fargo area, whether lead by their organization or by partner organizations in the region. A total of 16 talent strategies were catalogued, with varying strategy type (recruitment, retention, development) and timeline. Ady Advantage evaluated each of these strategies to map which key employer needs the strategies addressed, whether directly or indirectly. Ady Advantage then weighted core competencies of groups involved in the on-site analysis. A sliding scale was used to weight the alignment of GFMEDC's core competencies relative to partner organizations to better inform the best suited initiative champion.

The following are the summarized employer key needs, as outlined earlier in this report (the following does not serve as ranked list):

Key Need #1: Increased awareness of regional employers by local audiences, marketing the region and its assets to internal audiences, and focusing on retention of graduates by making them aware of career opportunities within the greater Fargo region.

Key Need #2: Better alignment of employer needs with training resources and educational offerings, matching students and their development opportunities to those careers that exist in the greater Fargo region, with a particular emphasis on the skilled trades.

Key Need #3: Community connections for both students and new employees, fostering a “community culture” that ingratiates and integrates talent into the community and makes them more apt to stay long-term.

Key Need #4: Additional recruitment capacity and awareness building, marketing the region and its assets to external audiences, and focusing on building and strengthening capacity to recruit talent to the region.

Key Need #5: Barrier removal for unemployed and/or underrepresented populations, allowing for employers to tap reservoirs of underleveraged population groups in the region by removing barriers such as access to transportation, access to childcare, language barriers, etc.

Talent Scorecard Matrix

INTRODUCTION

Below is the complete listing of all talent strategies in the Fargo-Moorhead region as identified by GFMEDC, whether led by their organization or by partner organizations in the region.

Manufacturing Day Tours – The GFMEDC organizes and is a sponsor of these yearly events. High school students tour a diverse group of manufacturing companies. Higher education institutions provide information about manufacturing careers and the education required for those opportunities.

CareerFM – The GFMEDC manages a jobs portal on our website to help recruit new residents to our region. The careers website, started in 1998, allows job seekers from outside the region to learn more about local opportunities and connect with great companies.

LiveinFargo.com – A website that resulted from the 2015 workforce study, funded by the five lead organizations: the GFMEDC, FM CVB, United Way of Cass Clay, FMWF Chamber and FM Area Foundation. It contains high quality video and photos and provides information on living and working in the Fargo Moorhead metro. Its primary purpose is to aid in attracting people into the region when companies are doing out of region recruitment.

HR Visits - GFMEDC staff visits with HR representatives to gather current workforce data, identify workforce needs and share information regarding various incentive programs. With the expansion of a strategic and objective CEO survey starting in 2019, it is likely the outreach to HR leadership will follow this same process.

FM Welcome Party - Created by the GFMEDC, these events are held for people who are new to the Fargo Moorhead community. Attendees can meet other people and learn more about what the region has to offer. More at www.fmwelcomeparty.com.

Partners in the Classroom – Created by the GFMEDC, community leaders representing all sectors volunteer to speak, judge or participate in classrooms in both the K-12 and higher-education.

Talent Scorecard Matrix

INTRODUCTION

Community Tours – The GFMEDC offers customized community tours for senior leadership candidates and spouses. We provide a packet of local information to educate the candidate on what the Fargo Moorhead area has to offer.

Education That Works – The GFMEDC created a program that brought together local K-12 leaders and the United Way of Cass Clay to work on three main initiatives:

- **Accelerated teacher professional development**
- **Communication and outreach regarding 21st century skills: 4C's** (Creativity, Critical thinking, Collaboration, Communication)
- **Preparing teachers to teach differently**

Health, Tech and Trades Expo – This expo is open to area 9th grade students. In 2017, 3,541 students had the opportunity to visit, build, draw and operate equipment with exhibitor companies showcasing health, technical and trades careers. This expo gives companies a chance to showcase job and educational opportunities while exposing students to available careers early in high school to potentially build curriculum around their interests.

Manufacturing Committee – This committee, created by the GFMEDC, is comprised of business leaders, K-12, higher education and Job Service ND representatives focused on manufacturing trends and various issues within manufacturing.

Mentors in Math - The EDC worked with NDSU to pilot this program in the 2015-2016 school year placing two engineering students in one class of second graders. The engineering students supplemented the math lessons with games and activities. Assessments showed an increase in student math scores across the board. It also provided an opportunity to provide each second grader a mentor and the college students gained valuable experience. As of Spring 2018, more than 175 second and seventh grade students in two schools have participated.

Talent Scorecard Matrix

INTRODUCTION

MSUM Sector Breakfasts - The GFMEDC helped create and continues to be a part of an ongoing series of meetings between the university and industry groups to better understand and respond to the skills needed for today's workforce.

- Education
- Technology
- Healthcare
- Finance
- Manufacturing
- Marketing

Educators in Industry – The GFMEDC partnered to create this program, which places K-12 teachers and professors in a corporate work environment for a four-week internship in the summer. The internship focuses on the overall work process, moving the teacher through different departments in the organization. The GFMEDC manages the program along with partner organizations.

FM Tech Connect - This initiative is the result of the IT Summit. A small group meets monthly to work on three goals: attract more IT professionals to the area, increase student interest in IT to build the pipeline of tech talent and finally to increase engagement and retain local tech talent .(This group is not currently meeting).

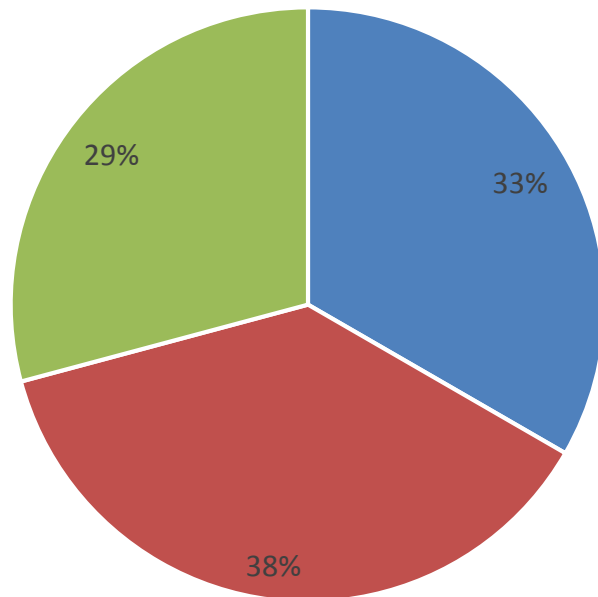
United Way's Workforce Development Initiative - UNITED for Workforce Development Pathways is a strategy developed to achieve United Way of Cass-Clay's BOLD Goals and increase collaboration among organizations focusing on workforce development. The GFMEDC provides funding to the United Way to support a position to implement this program

Talent Scorecard Matrix

TALENT STRATEGIES KEY FACTS

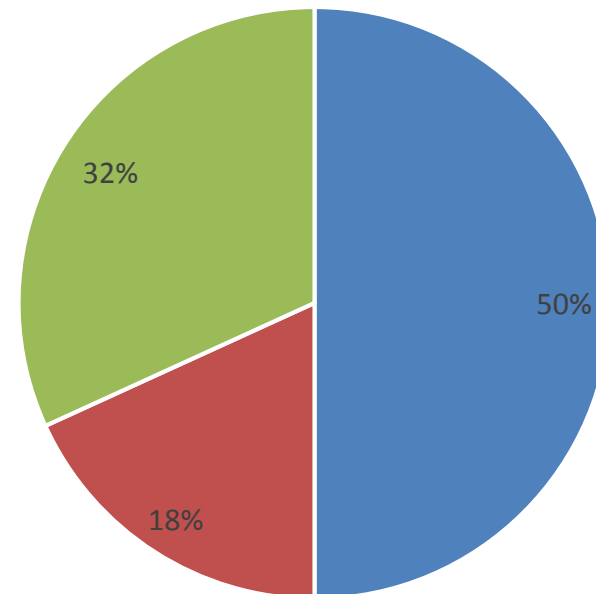
The talent strategies identified by the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation contained a balanced mix of timeline on return, with 33% providing short-term solutions, 38% providing mid-term solutions, and 29% providing long-term solutions. Of those talent strategies identified by the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation, half are focused on talent development. A-third of talent strategies focus on talent attraction, and less than one-fifth are focused on talent retention (although talent development often indirectly contributes to talent retention).

Talent Strategy Timeline



■ Short-term ■ Mid-term ■ Long-term

Talent Strategy Type



■ Development ■ Retention ■ Recruitment

Talent Scorecard Matrix

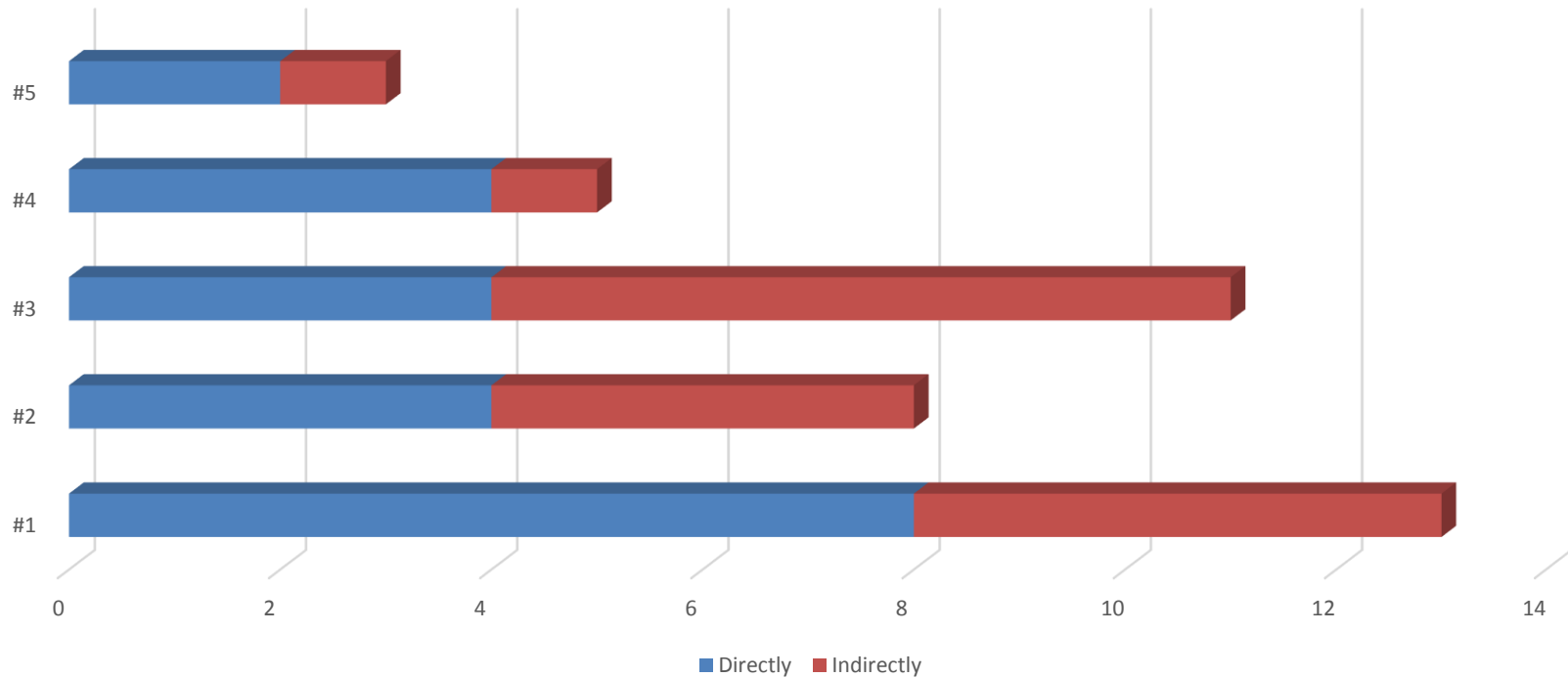
TALENT STRATEGIES KEY FACTS

Key Needs

- 1. Increased Awareness
- 2. Better Alignment
- 3. Community Connections
- 4. Recruitment Capacity
- 5. Barrier Removal

Of those talent strategies identified by the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation, employer key need #1 (increased awareness of regional employers by local audiences) was the need most addressed by existing talent strategies in the region. Employer key need #5 (barrier removal for unemployed and/or underrepresented populations) was the need least addressed by existing strategies in the region.

Employer Needs Addressed By Talent Strategies



Talent Scorecard Matrix

TALENT STRATEGIES MAPPED TO EMPLOYER KEY NEEDS

Key Needs

- 1. Increased Awareness
- 2. Better Alignment
- 3. Community Connections
- 4. Recruitment Capacity
- 5. Barrier Removal

Talent Strategy Matrix		
Talent Strategy	Employer Needs Addressed	GFMEDC - Core Competency - Partner
Manufacturing Day	Direct - #1 Indirect - #2	
CareerFM.com	Direct - #4 Indirect - #1	
www.liveinfargo.com	Direct - #3, 4	
HR Visits	Indirect - #2, 3, 4, 5	
FM Welcome Party	Direct - #3 Indirect - #1	
Partners in the Classroom	Direct - #1 Indirect - #2, 3	

Talent Scorecard Matrix

TALENT STRATEGIES MAPPED TO EMPLOYER KEY NEEDS

Key Needs

- 1. Increased Awareness
- 2. Better Alignment
- 3. Community Connections
- 4. Recruitment Capacity
- 5. Barrier Removal

Talent Strategy Matrix		
Talent Strategy	Employer Needs Addressed	GFMEDC - Core Competency - Partner
Community Tours	Direct - #4 Indirect - #1, 3	
Education that Works	Direct - #2 Indirect - #1, 3	
Health, Tech & Trades Career Expo	Direct - #1 Indirect - #3	
Manufacturing Committee	Direct - #1 Indirect - #2, 5	
Mentors in Math	Indirect - #2	
MSUM Sector Breakfast Meetings	Direct - #2 Indirect - #1, 3	

Talent Scorecard Matrix

TALENT STRATEGIES MAPPED TO EMPLOYER KEY NEEDS

Key Needs

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Increased Awareness | 4. Recruitment Capacity |
| 2. Better Alignment | 5. Barrier Removal |
| 3. Community Connections | |

Talent Strategy Matrix		
Talent Strategy	Employer Needs Addressed	GFMEDC - Core Competency - Partner
Educators in Industry	Direct - #1, 2 Indirect - #3	
FM Tech Connect	Direct - #1 Indirect - #3	
United Way's Workforce Development Initiative	Direct - #1, 3, 5 Indirect - #4	

Talent Scorecard Matrix

ANALYSIS

The talent scorecard provides an objective analysis using data gathered from the on-site analysis in conjunction with Ady Advantage's talent initiative database that tracks over 200 unique talent strategies. The on-site analysis provides a baseline understanding of the core competencies for each partner and GFMEDC. The database provides guidance on comparative examples and can inform best practices.

Talent Strategies

The majority of talent strategies identified in the study are focused on talent development. However, the least focus is placed on retention. This may create gaps within the talent ecosystem that increases the chances of "brain drain." The overall mix of the talent initiative portfolio is slightly unbalanced but focusing primarily on the existing workforce, which is generally recommended. The return on investment for strategies is largely balanced. There is a slight skew towards those strategies that have a higher payback in the short and mid-term. This focus is well aligned with impacting the employer needs in the region.

Key Employer Needs

The existing talent initiative portfolio is primarily focused on creating more awareness of local opportunities, targeting local audiences. Two initiatives that directly influence most of the key employer needs include the HR Visits and United Way's Workforce initiative arguably creating more opportunity to impact those specific needs. The HR Visits present the highest impact and most aligned with GFMEDC's core competency. Key employer need five had the least total number of strategies supporting it. The on-site analysis identified barrier removal as a significant interest of stakeholders and employers alike. Only one key need, number four, focused on recruitment. All other needs were a mix of retention or development or more commonly a combination of both.

Talent Scorecard Matrix

ANALYSIS

As part of the overall analysis, Ady Advantage aligned the key employer needs to the three primary activities typical within talent strategy portfolios: retention, recruitment, and development.

Key Need #1: Increased awareness of regional employers by local audiences.



Retention and Development

Key Need #2: Better alignment of employer needs with training resources and educational offerings.



Development

Key Need #3: Community connections for both students and new employees.



Retention

Key Need #4: Additional recruitment capacity and awareness building.



Recruitment

Key Need #5: Barrier removal for unemployed and/or underrepresented populations.



Retention and Development



Section 4: Recommendations

Talent Strategy Workshop Session

INTRODUCTION

The following section captures the outcomes from the strategy planning workshop and articulates the final recommendations for the regional talent strategy workplan.

Strategy Planning Workshop

On February 19, 2019, Ady Advantage facilitated the strategy planning workshop. The workshop was attended by members of Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation's (GFMEDC) board and leadership team. The Workshop had three components. First, it highlighted project process to date and shared data and findings from the on-site analysis that took place in December. Second, attendees participated in an exercise that reviewed the existing slate of GFMEDC's talent portfolio and provided strategic recommendations on each initiative's alignment with GFMEDC's core mission. Finally, Ady Advantage shared early recommendations on its talent scorecard matrix and discussed approach and rationale for its decision-making.

Final Recommendations

The results of the strategy planning workshop was used to inform the final recommendations that follow in this section. The section first lays out the responses and result of the workshop then immediately follows with the combined analysis from Ady Advantage's talent scorecard along with the integration of stakeholder input. The final recommendation is based on each of these factors. Taking into consideration the mission and core competencies of GFMEDC along with the objective to impact employer needs more immediately, the final recommendations are framed by those initiatives that aim to recruit and retain talent and impact employer's in the short-term (one to three years).

Talent Strategy Workshop Session

Work Session Summary

The work session summary represents the collaborative outcome from the discussions with GFMEDC board members and staff leadership.

Talent Strategy	GFMEDC Alignment
Manufacturing Day	Somewhat Aligned
CareerFM.com	Not at All Aligned
www.liveinfargo.com	Very Aligned to Somewhat Aligned
HR Visits	Very Aligned
FM Welcome Party	Neutral/Balanced
Partners in the Classroom	Not at All Aligned

Talent Strategy Workshop Session

Work Session Summary

Talent Strategy	GFMEDC Alignment
Community Tours	Somewhat Aligned
Education that Works	Somewhat Misaligned
Health, Tech & Trades Career Expo	Somewhat Aligned
Manufacturing Committee	Not at All Aligned
Mentors in Math	Not at All Aligned
MSUM Sector Breakfast Meetings	Neutral/Balanced

Talent Strategy Workshop Session

Work Session Summary

Talent Strategy	GFMEDC Alignment
Educators in Industry	Somewhat Misaligned to Not at All Aligned
FM Tech Connect	Somewhat Misaligned to Not at All Aligned
United Way's Workforce Development Initiative	Somewhat Aligned

Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The following section provides recommendations on each of the initiatives within GFMEDC's current talent portfolio. The recommendations designate a role or roles that GFMEDC should play in a given talent initiative. The definition of each of these roles is articulated below.

ACTIVE ROLE

The active role is primarily responsible for designing and/or leading strategies and is ultimately responsible for tracking KPIs and for their success. There are likely more than people and time resources provided to drive the initiative.

ACTIVE/SUPPORT ROLES

The active/support role suggests that initiatives are important to GFMEDC's core mission and warrant more direct leadership/involvement from GFMEDC but may not require significant investment on the part of GFMEDC.

SUPPORT

The support role helps to implement and create successful outcomes but does not lead initiatives or create direction. The supporter may be able to influence KPIs but is not responsible for tracking or their success. The support role will likely provide leadership time and help to bridge the initiative leader with other groups to help implement and execute the initiative's overall plan.







NO ROLE

No role indicates that initiative falls outside of GFMEDC's core mission. It is likely the initiative is more aligned with another group or organization's core mission and should be led or supported by those most aligned. GFMEDC should not have a role in leading these initiatives.




Recommendations

Talent Strategy	GFMEDC - Core Competency – Partner Ady Advantage Analysis	Stakeholder Input – GFMEDC Alignment Level	Recommended Role for GFMEDC
Manufacturing Day		Somewhat Aligned	Support
CareerFM.com		Not at All Aligned	No Role
www.liveinfargo.com		Very Aligned – Somewhat Aligned	Active
HR Visits		Very Aligned	Active
FM Welcome Party		Neutral/Balanced	Active/Support
Partners in the Classroom		Not at All Aligned	No Role

Recommendations

Talent Strategy	GFMEDC - Core Competency – Partner Ady Advantage Analysis	Stakeholder Input – GFMEDC Alignment Level	Recommendations / Next Steps
Community Tours		Somewhat Aligned	Active
Education that Works		Somewhat Misaligned	No Role
Health, Tech & Trades Career Expo		Somewhat Aligned	Active/Support
Manufacturing Committee		Not at All Aligned	No role
Mentors in Math		Not at All Aligned	No Role
MSUM Sector Breakfast Meetings		Neutral/Balanced	Support

Recommendations

Talent Strategy	GFMEDC - Core Competency – Partner Ady Advantage Analysis	Stakeholder Input – GFMEDC Alignment Level	Recommendations / Next Steps
Educators in Industry		Somewhat Misaligned – Not at All Aligned	No Role
FM Tech Connect		Somewhat Misaligned – Not at All Aligned	No Role
United Way’s Workforce Development Initiative		Somewhat Aligned	Support

Recommendations and Key Takeaways

ACTIVE ROLE

The following initiatives are well-aligned with GFMEDC's core mission in that the initiatives focus on short-term results and help to impact recruitment and retention efforts in the region.

- LiveinFargo.com
- HR visits
- Community Tours

ACTIVE/SUPPORT ROLES

The outcomes of these initiatives work to address recruitment and retention efforts in the region and have potential to create short-term results. However, GFMEDC should play an advising role in planning and implementing these initiatives, but should be supported by other organizations in the implementation of the initiatives.

- FM Welcome Party
- Health, Tech and Trades Career Expo

SUPPORT

The outcomes of these initiatives primarily impact talent development goals and/or serve audiences that are not interstate commerce/primary sector employers. GFMEDC's role should serve to advise and help support the initiative through a regional leadership perspective.

- Manufacturing Day
- MSUM Sector Breakfast Meeting
- United Way's Workforce Development Initiative

Recommendations and Key Takeaways

NO ROLE

The following initiatives are primarily focused on talent development and long-term outcomes, which does not align with GFMEDC's core mission. Secondly, some initiatives are no longer effective in their current structure and need to be re-evaluated for a different approach to implementation.

- CareerFM.com
- Partners in the Classroom
- Education That Works
- Manufacturing Committee
- Mentors in Math
- Educators in Industry
- FM Tech Connect

About Ady Advantage

Published by Ady Advantage, a comprehensive and integrated economic development market research and marketing consulting firm. Our experience on both sides of the economic development equation is unique. It gives us important insight into the perspectives, challenges, and sensitivities of both manufacturers and economic development organizations, bringing added value to both. And we're the only such firm that not only makes marketing recommendations, but also helps you build your website, market to prospective businesses, and use social media as a competitive advantage. Our corporate services focus on helping manufacturers, utilities and other sectors grow their businesses through an integrated solution set that includes research, competitive positioning, marketing strategy, integrated communications, and facility expansion.

Contact us today for more information or if you have any questions on this report.

Janet Ady

President and CEO

608.663.9218

jady@adyadvantage.com