

REGIONAL DATA & ANALYTICS SUMMIT

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A Collaboration Between:

Hosted by:



OVERALL FINDINGS/THEMES FROM THE SUMMIT

The following represents a listing of themes that were heard across nearly all of the targeted industry sector breakout sessions. The most critical take-away was that “Urgency is Real” given the impacts of the talent shortages are expected to be most pronounced from 2030-2035.

The following themes are organized into buckets for which we believe results can be achieved, though all must be worked on immediately:

NEAR-TERM RESULTS (NOW AND WITHIN TWO YEARS)

EARLY, EXPERIENTIAL EXPOSURE IS CRITICAL

Students and job-seekers across all levels need multiple real-world touchpoints – internships, apprenticeships, mentorships, project-based learning – to connect education with careers.

TALENT RETENTION ISN'T OPTIONAL – IT'S CRITICAL

Workforce stability depends on internal culture, leadership development, upskilling, and visible career ladders.

TALENT ATTRACTION: IT'S A NUMBERS GAME

Population growth via targeted attraction from across the U.S.A., student attraction to our higher education institutions, and immigration are critical. Providing “soft landing” supports is essential to fill gaps.

MID-TERM RESULTS (WITHIN 3-5 YEARS)

MINDSET SHIFT: FROM “JOBS” TO “JOURNEYS”

Careers should be framed as evolving pathways, not endpoints – valuing character, growth, and adaptability as important as credentials. With rapid technological change (AI, automation), cultural alignment and learning agility are more sustainable hiring criteria.

ALIGNMENT OVER ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Programs abound – but fragmentation, lack of shared goals, and per-silo incentives reduce effectiveness. Unified coordination must be a requirement.

REMOVE THE ROADBLOCKS

Even the best workforce strategies can be derailed by unresolved structural barriers – childcare, housing, licensing, immigration, and regulatory friction.

EDUCATION-INDUSTRY POLICY REALIGNMENT

Current funding, credentialing, and procurement models are outdated; they must incentivize outcomes, alignment, and agility. Transformative progress requires deliberate partnerships across sectors, driven by aligned metrics that support employers' talent needs.

HEALTHCARE & BIOSCIENCE

COMMON THEMES AND ACTION ITEMS



COMMON THEMES

EXPOSURE & AWARENESS GAPS START EARLY AND PERSIST

- Lack of early and sustained exposure to healthcare and bioscience careers, particularly beyond the high-visibility roles like doctors and nurses.
- Many students and young professionals have misaligned expectations (e.g., nurse schedules, job stress) or lack awareness of viable roles (e.g., lab techs, bioscience research).
- Career exploration efforts are fragmented or not well-attended—suggesting either low awareness or low perceived relevance.

SYSTEMIC BARRIERS: CHILDCARE, COST AND ACCLIMATION

- Childcare access and affordability was a standout structural barrier, impacting current and potential healthcare workers.
- International recruiting is necessary but under-leveraged due to integration, licensing, and community acclimation challenges.
- Cost of upskilling and unclear funding paths also prevent advancement.

RETENTION CHALLENGES ARE SYSTEMIC, NOT JUST STAFFING

- The workforce gap is not just about hiring, but retaining talent—especially amid burnout, poor career progression, and lack of visible pathways.
- Employers cite feedback loops, culture challenges with temporary/contingent workers, and the need to prioritize employee advancement.
- Immigration and language barriers further complicate team integration, retention, and upskilling.

EDUCATION ALIGNMENT & CAREER PATHWAYS ARE LAGGING

- While education institutions are making efforts, career pathways are not yet seamless or fast enough, especially in bioscience and nursing.
- Strong call for accelerated credentialing, applied learning, and integration of work-based experiences into degree programs.
- The gap between internships and employment is a frequent pain point.

HEALTHCARE & BIOSCIENCE

COMMON THEMES CONTINUED

MOMENTUM EXISTS AROUND COLLECTIVE ACTION AND POLICY REFORM

- There's recognition that cross-sector collaboration (government, education, industry) is crucial.
- Participants highlighted a desire to "make it hard to leave Fargo-Moorhead" by fostering community, promoting upward mobility, and improving lifestyle infrastructure.
- A unique opportunity exists to become a national leader by reforming K-20 education and aligning it closely with regional workforce needs.



WHAT THE EDC IS GOING TO DO...NOW AND INTO 2026

BioscienceSummit.com

TALENT ATTRACTION

We're putting the FM region on the map with talent attraction marketing, alumni recruitment-focused campaigns, and targeted recruitment of critical occupations.

- With our Lightning Recruitment program, the GFMEDC is helping numerous companies locate and message individuals in hard to fill occupations. Let us know how we can support your company.
- Brand marketing of the region through www.LiveInFMArea.com. We are communicating with more than 21,000 individuals who have shown an interest in the region, and those relationships continue to grow.
- We are working on a student recruitment program to support our higher education institutions and are doing this in partnership with the Chamber and the Metro College Alliance.

TALENT RETENTION

- Company Culture Program – We currently have more than a dozen companies working with us to develop a survey and networking group to support great company culture.

TALENT RETENTION CONTINUED

- We have been targeting higher education students pursuing degrees in healthcare and bioscience careers to stay in the region by attending our Bioscience Summit this Oct 15-16.
- We will host 100-200 high school students interested in the sciences to attend the Bioscience Summit (Oct 15-16) and meet with higher education admissions staff and dozens of biotech and healthcare companies taking part in the summit.

POLICY ADVOCACY & DATA

- The GFMEDC is assisting The Chamber with gathering and analyzing policy-driven data from our Business Retention and Expansion Surveys (with company approval). Aggregating this information means more data getting into the hands of legislators to make informed decisions on what businesses in FM need.
- With the creation of the FM Data & Analytics Team, the GFMEDC is committed to gathering and analyzing data that continues to tell the story of the FM economy. This Fall, the GFMEDC along with partners will be conducting our second annual workforce survey.



The GFMEDC encourages our industry partners and key collaborators to commit to addressing some of the key themes in this report. Let us, and those involved in this important work, know how you and your organization will drive outcome-based results to ensure the “Rising Storm” of talent challenges ahead of us are met head-on, leaving our region and states resilient to win the war on talent.

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IMPORTANT RESOURCES



THE RISING STORM



DATA PROFILES