

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services**  
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**Vocational Rehabilitation Needs Assessment Underway**

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Department of Human Services is partnering with several organizations to conduct a survey and focus groups across North Dakota to determine vocational rehabilitation needs in the state. Findings will shape service delivery and program priorities for the next three years.

The effort involves the State Rehabilitation Council, which includes consumers and representatives from agencies and businesses, the department, the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities at Minot State University, and the Consensus Council. Together they are seeking information from advocacy and provider organizations, people with disabilities, agencies, business organizations, special education units, centers for independent living, and the general public.

The survey is now underway. Individuals who did not receive a survey and who are interested in participating may contact the state Vocational Rehabilitation Unit at 701-328-8950, toll free 800-755-2745, TTY 701-328-8968, [dhsds@state.nd.us](mailto:dhsds@state.nd.us), or fax 701-328-8969. Surveys are due February 24.

Focus groups were conducted in Minot, Bismarck, Devils Lake, Jamestown, Fargo, and Williston and concentrated on populations that may be underserved including American Indians, people with mental illness, and refugees.

“Our goal is to identify the needs in our state, so that we can plan for and deliver employment services and other vocational rehabilitation services appropriately,” said Yvonne M. Smith, director of the department’s Disability Services Division.

In recent years, North Dakota’s Vocational Rehabilitation Program has been recognized nationally for its business services and for its rural outreach efforts.

Vocational rehabilitation services include training and employment services that help people with disabilities to become and remain employed. The Disability Services Division of the Department of Human Services also provides older blind services, business consultation services, and services that help people live independently in their homes.

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