

# North Dakota Adult Education

The Road to Success



NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

## ***Adult Education: The Road to Success***

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Sara would like to thank the directors and staff members at North Dakota's Adult Learning Centers for their help in the preparation of this booklet.

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# Adult Education Leads to Success

Adult education —teaching and educating adults— ensures they have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively as citizens, workers, parents, family members, and community members.

North Dakota has provided adult education services since 1967. Initial services began as “evening programs” in a handful of select schools and college campuses. The demand for programs grew every year and along with the continuation of the part-time evening programs, several full-time programs were also established. There are currently eight state-funded regional centers, four satellite sites in North Dakota, and Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation sites that provide services throughout the state.

North Dakota’s Adult Education Programs support adult basic education, adult secondary education and English language acquisition. These programs emphasize basic skills such as reading, writing, math, English language competency, problem-solving, technology skills, and career preparation.

Many program participants are working to obtain the equivalent of a high school diploma by passing the (GED). Candidates for the GED are required to study for, take and pass tests that measure high school level skills and knowledge. Passing the tests and obtaining a GED diploma is just as much a reason to celebrate as high school graduation. The opportunities for better employment and education for GED graduates are endless.

Another fast-growing sector of adult education is English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), also referred to as English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Language Learners (ELL). These courses are key in assisting immigrants and refugees with the development of their English language skills and in helping them to acclimate to the culture of the U.S.

There is great enthusiasm and pride among North Dakota adult learners. The stories featured in this booklet highlight a few of the students who have taken the road to success and achieved their goals with the help of adult education.

For further information regarding Adult Education key data points and an interactive map, visit ND Insights or our Adult Education website. Please contact North Dakota’s Department of Public Instruction with any questions and feedback via email to the following address: [dpidashboard@nd.gov](mailto:dpidashboard@nd.gov).

# Adult Education: A Necessity

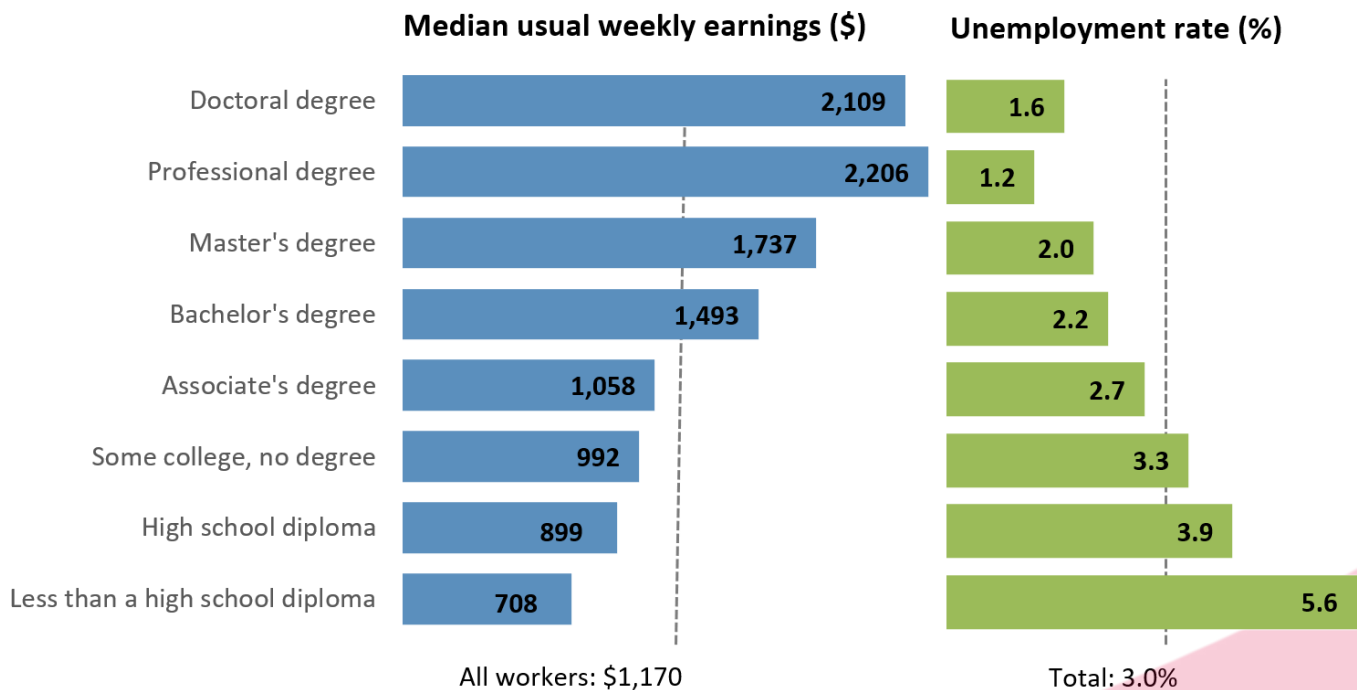
High school graduation rates in the U.S. vary significantly from state to state. The national average for high school graduation rate stands at around 91% in 2023 ([wisevoter.com/state-rankings/high-school-graduation-rates-by-state](https://www.wisevoter.com/state-rankings/high-school-graduation-rates-by-state)).

By 2022, 62.3% of students who started college full time in 2016 earned a bachelor's degree at that institution. The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center found that 62.3% of full-time students at all four-year institutions graduate within six years (Bankrate, Bareham, Hanneh, 2023).

Dropouts represent a tremendous loss of human potential and productivity and reduce the nation's ability to compete in an increasingly global economy. Everyone benefits from increased graduation rates. Graduates, on average, will earn higher wages and enjoy more comfortable and secure lifestyles. At the same time, the state and nation benefit from their increased purchasing power, collects higher tax receipt, and see higher levels of worker productivity.

The chart below reflects the earnings potential at differing levels of education.

## Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2023



Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

*On average, furthering education increases both income, as well as the odds of holding a job.*

# Description of Earnings

If you're wondering whether it pays to stay in school, take a look at data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: As workers' educational attainment rises, their unemployment rates decrease and earnings increase.

As the charts show, workers aged 25 and over who have less education than a high school diploma or GED had the highest unemployment rate (5.6%) and lowest median weekly earnings (\$708) in 2023 among those at all education levels. Workers with graduate degrees had the lowest unemployment rates and highest earnings ("Education Pays, 2023," Career Outlook, BLS).

Recent BLS data shows that job growth is about zero or negative for those with no college education. Low-income students are 2.4 times more likely to drop out of school as middle-income students and 10 times more likely to drop out than students from higher income families.

Adult education can be the solution to the skills gap between employers and workers, if funding meets demand.

As for employers, they see benefits in finding workers who can bridge the skills gap mismatch that persists in many fields. Employers also partner with adult education programs to develop courses that provide learners with the skills and knowledge that local employers need.

Today, 43 million adults are low-skilled in literacy and 62.7 million adults are low-skilled in numeracy.

Real average hourly earnings for all employees increased 0.6% from March 2023 to March 2024. Real earnings are earnings that have been adjusted for changes in consumer prices. The change in real average hourly earnings combined with no change in the average workweek resulted in a 0.6% increase in real average weekly earnings over this period (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 10, 2024 news release).

Between August 2023 and September 2023, unemployment fell by 866, a decrease of 13.3%. North Dakota typically sees a moderate decline in unemployment numbers between August and September. The over-the-year decrease (September 2022 to September 2023) in unemployed labor force was 688, a loss of 10.9%. In September 2023, the unemployment rate in North Dakota was 1.3%.

# North Dakota In-Demand Occupations List

The in-demand occupations list was primarily created using long-term employment projections from the North Dakota Labor Market Information Center and supplemented by data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The list is reviewed and updated annually by the Workforce Development Council with assistance from Job Service North Dakota. The list is primarily comprised of occupations that typically require some postsecondary education up to and including a bachelor's degree.

Adult Education High School Equivalency graduates typically earn close to \$10,000 more per year once they get their diplomas (coabe.org).

## IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

### EDUCATION

Educational, Guidance, & Career Counselors & Advisors  
Teachers  
Career/Technical Education Teachers, Except Postsecondary School  
Elementary School Teachers  
Kindergarten Teachers  
Preschool Teachers  
Middle School Teachers  
Secondary School Teachers  
Special Education Teachers  
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary

### FINANCIAL

Accountants and Auditors  
Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks  
Financial Analysts and Risk and Other Financial Specialists  
Financial Managers  
Management Analysts  
Operations Research Analysts  
Tax Preparers

### ENGINEERING & ARCHITECTURE

Architects, Except Landscape and Naval Architectural and Civil Drafters  
Architectural and Engineering Managers  
Civil Engineers  
Civil Engineering Technologists & Technicians  
Electrical Engineers  
Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technicians  
Industrial Engineers  
Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians  
Mechanical Engineers  
Petroleum Engineers

### HEALTHCARE

Biological Technicians  
Dental Assistants  
Dental Hygienists  
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers  
Environmental Science & Protection Technicians, Including Health  
Medical Assistants  
Nursing Assistants  
Nurse  
Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses  
Registered Nurses  
Occupational Health and Safety Specialists  
Occupational Therapy Assistants  
Physical Therapist Assistants  
Respiratory Therapists  
Technologists & Technicians  
Clinical Laboratory Technologists & Technicians  
Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics  
Pharmacy Technicians  
Ophthalmic Medical Technicians  
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians  
Surgical Technologists  
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Computer and Information Systems Managers  
Computer Network Support Specialists  
Computer Programmers  
Computer Systems Analysts  
Computer User Support Specialists  
Intelligence Analysts  
Information Security Analysts  
Software Developers & Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers  
Telecommunications Equipment Installers & Repairers, Except Line Installers  
Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers  
Web Developers & Digital Interface Designers

### SKILLED TRADE

Airplane Mechanic/Technician  
Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics  
Butchers & Meatcutters  
Carpenters  
Chefs & Head Cooks  
Chemical Plant/System Operator  
Crane and Tower Operators, Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators  
Diesel Technician  
Industrial Machinery Mechanics  
Bus and Truck Mechanics & Diesel Engine Specialists  
Farm Equipment Mechanics & Service Technicians  
Electricians  
Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial Equipment  
Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers  
Firefighters  
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, & Cosmetologists  
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics  
Machinist  
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines  
Petroleum Pump System Operators and Refinery Operators  
Plant and System Operators, All Other  
Plumbers, Pipefitters, & Steamfitters  
Precision Agriculture Technicians  
Production Workers, All Other  
Pump Operators, Except Wellhead Pumps  
Rotary Drill Operators, Oil and Gas  
Service Unit Operators, Oil and Gas  
Surveying and Mapping Technicians  
Surveyors  
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers  
Wind Turbine Service Technicians

### TRANSPORTATION

Commercial Pilot  
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers  
Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity

### SOCIAL SERVICES

Child, Family, & School Social Workers  
Childcare Workers  
Community & Social Service Specialists, Social & Human Service Assistants  
Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers  
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, & Mental Health Counselors

### MANAGEMENT

Administrative Services and Facilities Managers  
Construction Managers  
General & Operations Managers  
Industrial Production Managers  
Medical & Health Services Managers  
Project Management Specialists & Other Business Operations  
Sales Managers

### PROFESSIONAL/OTHER

Compliance Officers  
Human Resources Specialists  
Paralegals and Legal Assistants  
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists  
Training and Development Specialists

### SALES

Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing, Technical & Scientific Products

Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) are considered in-demand jobs per guidance under the United States Department of Labor. For a complete listing of RAPs in North Dakota, go to: <https://www.job-service-nd.com/apprenticeships>

The in-demand occupations list was primarily created using long-term employment projections from the North Dakota Labor Market Information Center and supplemented by data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The list is reviewed and updated annually by the Workforce Development Council with assistance from Job Service North Dakota. The list is primarily comprised of occupations that typically require some postsecondary education up to and including a bachelor's degree. The factors used in creating the list are below:

- Total Employment (2022)
- Ten-year Numeric Job Growth (2021-2031)
- Annualized Job Growth Rate (2021-2031)
- Annual Job Openings (2021-2031)
- Average Annual Wages (2022)
- Essential and Emerging Occupations

Job Service North Dakota is an equal opportunity employer/program provider. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

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**NORTH Dakota** | Job Service  
Be Legendary.

Adult Learning Centers provide a gateway to a broad range of growing job fields.

# What We're About

## Mission

NDDPI promotes and supports programs at “no cost” that help individuals over the age of 16 obtain basic academic and educational skills to be productive workers, family members, and citizens.

## Vision

Our vision is that adult education classes provide a second opportunity for adult learners committed to improving their academic and career skills and assist adults to be contributing and successful citizens.

## Goals and Objectives

Maximize services to meet adult needs in all eight North Dakota regions and five correctional sites, remove barriers prohibiting success, and prepare for post-secondary and workforce opportunities through partnerships with other agencies. Our goal is to provide services for all adults that meet our definition, with focus on tribal, rural, and New American populations in our state.

We serve adults who:

- are at least 16 years of age;
- are not enrolled in high school;
- do not have a high school diploma;
- are mandated assistance by state law;
- may lack mastery of basic educational skills; and/or
- can't speak, read, or write the English language.

For every 400,000 adults who earn a high school diploma, the economy gains \$2.5 billion back in tax revenue and reduced expenses. That's \$6,250 per person! The estimated value to our economy in reduced costs for public support programs for low skilled, low literate adults is \$200 billion annually (coabe.org).

# What We Do

## **GED Preparation and Testing**

Instruction is provided in reading/writing, science, social studies, math, digital literacy skills, and English language acquisition for adults with limited English. Instruction is geared to help adults successfully pass all four parts of the GED, skill up for employment, or continue in post-secondary opportunities.

## **Support and Referrals**

The Adult Learning Centers work closely with local agencies to ensure all adults being served receive the instruction with supports/referrals they need to minimize barriers and empower students to be successful as a whole person.

## **Displaced Homemaker Program**

Adult Learning Centers provide services to individuals who are considered displaced through separation, divorce, death or disability of a spouse, or other loss of support therefore without any source of income; to assist individuals with independence and economic security.

## **English Language Services and Refugee Resettlement**

Instruction is designed for adults who have limited proficiency in the English language or whose native language is not English with an emphasis on listening and speaking, as well as assistance to become U.S. citizens. Adult Learning Centers have a partnership with the North Dakota Office of Refugee Resettlement, employ a career navigator staffer to advise learners, and have a EL curriculum to meet needs.

## **Workplace and Career Planning**

Adult Learning Centers provide support and instruction on digital literacy skills, soft skills, goal setting, job inventories, job applications, resumes, job search, interviews practice, and connection with agencies to assist with employment.



# What We're Proud Of

## GED Pass Rate (2023)

North Dakota has been rated in the top five in the nation for the past four years. Our current GED pass rate is 87%. In 2023, 72% of GED testers were under the age of 24 and 53% were under the age of 19.

## IET Development

ESSER funds started Integrated Education and Training programs for workforce training. This program was a success and is now state funded. These programs include introductory certified nursing assistant, phlebotomy tech, commercial driver license, heavy equipment operator, and paraeducator/educator.

## Partnerships

- North Dakota Job Service
- North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation
- Workforce Development Council
- North Dakota Department of Commerce
- North Dakota Association for Lifelong Learning
- North Dakota Office of Refugee Resettlement
- Post-Secondary Institutions



*The Adult Learning Center program is administered on the 11th floor of the state capitol building.*

# Success Stories

## *Adult Learning Across North Dakota*

Over the last several decades, Adult Learning Centers across North Dakota have helped thousands of students accelerate their careers. Let's check out some of their most recent stories.



*Graduation at Dickinson Adult Learning Center.*



# Ellen

## Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation 2024 GED Graduate

### Her Story

Ellen is from Liberia, in West Africa. During her younger years, there was a war in her country, causing her to flee to Cote d'Ivoire. She got separated from her parents when she was only 13 years old and was responsible for all three of her younger brothers. Here, she met her husband and had a baby girl.

On May 26, 2004, Ellen came to the U.S. with her three brothers and daughter. Her husband couldn't come. She and the children first moved to Virginia, where a caseworker helped them. She was able to get a job as a janitor at a school so she could take care of their family. After a few months, one of her brothers got sick and needed surgery and was hospitalized for over a month. Later, he wanted to attend high school so he could take care of Ellen, but he was told he wasn't old enough. It never stopped him. A friend of Ellen's helped him get into high school. He graduated, which then allowed him to attend Virginia Tech. Ellen's brothers wanted her to go to school but she wasn't able due to her many jobs. She had a second daughter. After she came into the world, her dad walked out on Ellen, and she was left to do everything alone. Two years later, she had a son.

These hardships led to hard choices that Ellen regrets, but she is thankful for the grace of God and feels blessed to still be alive. At the North Dakota Department of Corrections, Ellen was able to finally get her education. She received her GED. She said, "I made my children proud of me and my oldest will be turning 21 in September and is in college."



### Next Steps

Ellen wants to pursue a college degree to become a counselor to help families. She wants to give back to society. "God was a blessing to me, and I want to be a blessing to others," she said.

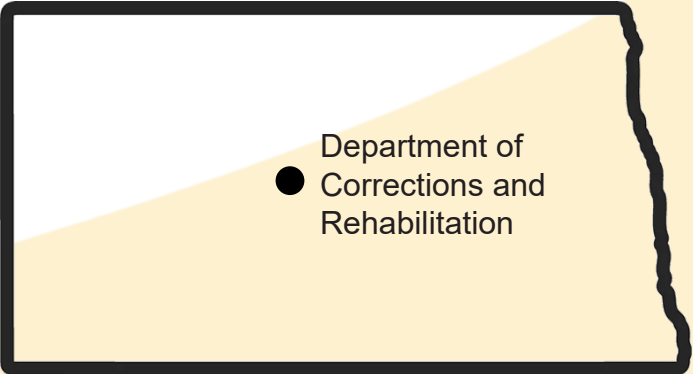
### Ellen's Advice

"Never give up on yourself. It's okay to fall, but don't stay on the ground. Do everything that you can to get up because no one can stop you from achieving your goals and dreams but yourself. Always believe

in yourself. With the help of God, everything is possible. Just because other people say you can't do it, it doesn't mean you can't. If you have life, you have hope for a better tomorrow."

### Fact

*There are numerous barriers and challenges facing the men and women who travel through our criminal justice system, and yet it is education, literacy, and skill development which frequently holds the key to the revolving doors of our prison system. Recent studies support the importance of education and training in our prison systems and the fact that with just one educational class in prison, an individual can reduce his/her chance of recidivism by 43%. (coabe.org).*



Department of  
Corrections and  
Rehabilitation

# Michelle

*Williston Adult Learning Center, Region I  
2024 GED Graduate*

## Her Story

Michelle is a very quiet person when you first meet her. She and her mom were very motivated students when they came into the Williston Adult Learning Center. Michelle moved to Williston in the summer of 2023 from Africa. While attending Williston ALC to obtain a GED, she also completed the CNA course using our Integrated Education and Training program.



## Next Steps

Michelle's next step is to continue her education at Williston State College. She will be working toward an associate in arts degree and her major will be early childhood education. Once she completes her two years at Williston State College, she will transfer to a four-year institution to complete her degree.

## Fact

*GED graduates from William County qualify for the Williams County Scholarship if they attend the Williston ALC. The ALC introduces students to Williston State College staff for enrollment and helps with any college-related questions. Each student can receive a campus tour to prepare them for enrolling (WSC.edu).*

## Michelle's Advice

"Never give up, and know that it is never too late. Dedication and believing in yourself takes you to your goals that you once thought was not possible. Never keep to yourself, there is a lot of help there to help you reach your goal. All you need to do is reach out. My greatest helper was Brenna Lordemann, the Director of the Williston ALC, and my GED teacher. She helped me gain my confidence and held my hand through all my struggles during my GED lessons. I made it because of what a great teacher and adviser she is. Thank you so much! To anyone looking to change their life and get their GED, come to Williston State College and you will get the best advice and help from great teachers who will go to great lengths to make your dream come true."

● Willison ALC



# Amanda

*Minot Adult Learning Center, Region II  
2024 GED Graduate*

## Her Story

In fourth grade, Amanda's world began to unravel when her parents divorced. After moving away with her mother, Amanda started fighting at school and turned to alcohol and drugs to cope with her frustration, anger, and pain. In ninth grade, she became pregnant and dropped out of school. While the decision to leave school and care for her child was easy, life only grew more difficult as Amanda's partner began to abuse her. Amanda was alone again.

When she met her husband, life began to turn around. He became her biggest supporter. Now in her 30s, Amanda decided it was time to finish school. She was so anxious that she couldn't even leave the car; her husband had to register her. Being a full-time mom and a full-time student was challenging. Sacrificing time with family and friends was often difficult, yet Amanda persevered.

She shared at her graduation ceremony, "To the Minot Adult Learning Center, I can't thank you enough for never giving up on us when we said we couldn't do it. You always found a way to touch our hearts and get us to believe in ourselves. Thank you for inspiring us, challenging us, and believing in us, even when we couldn't see it for ourselves. You've made lasting impacts on all our lives that we will forever be grateful for."

## Next Steps

Amanda is currently celebrating with her family. She is exploring several options for her future, including vocational school, college, and entering the workforce directly.

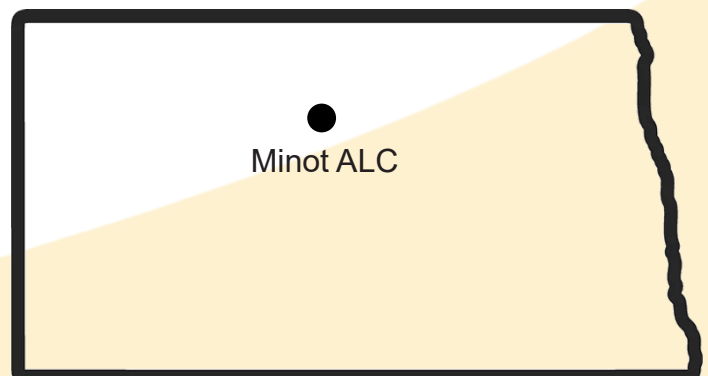


## Amanda's Advice

"Always follow your dreams and trust in yourself. This is but one significant milestone in all our lives as we continue to grow and seek out even greater challenges. Keep going!"

## Fact

*Expanding your focus on Adult Education moves people forward and will fill more jobs.*



# Jessica

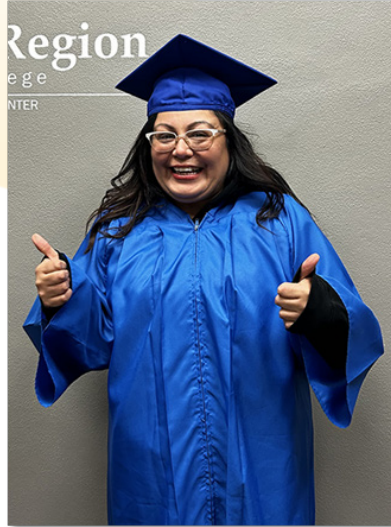
**Devils Lake Adult Learning Center, Region III  
2023 GED Graduate**

## Her Story

Jessica came to North Dakota from California with one hope and that was to provide a better opportunity for her family. Her first job in Devils Lake was working in the deli of the local grocery store. Jessica was a single mom working full time supporting her kids. She was an older than average student but wanted to find a better job opportunity for herself. With the encouragement of her mom, and the motivation of setting an example for her children and grandson, she pursued her GED. She was strained by the lack of time she had to devote to her studies but continued to forge on, even when she was dealt a loss. She started to pursue her GED in October 2022. By the end of January 2023, she had studied and completed three of her four official tests, leaving math as her only obstacle. It was a subject that caused her anxiety and a struggle she dealt with for several months. Each time Jessica came to the ALC, she brought an exemplary attitude and the devotion to absorb as much as she could. Jessica asked questions, was engaged when instructors worked problems with her, and studied on her own due to her full-time job and limited availability to attend class. Even when she experienced a score that wasn't to her liking, she carried on and hung onto knowing she could do it. After hours of studying, trying ready exams, and taking the math official test, she earned her GED in November 2023.

## Next Steps

As soon as Jessica completed her GED she started looking thought all those doors that were open to her in the workforce. She is currently in training at the Altru Clinic in Devils Lake as a phlebotomist.

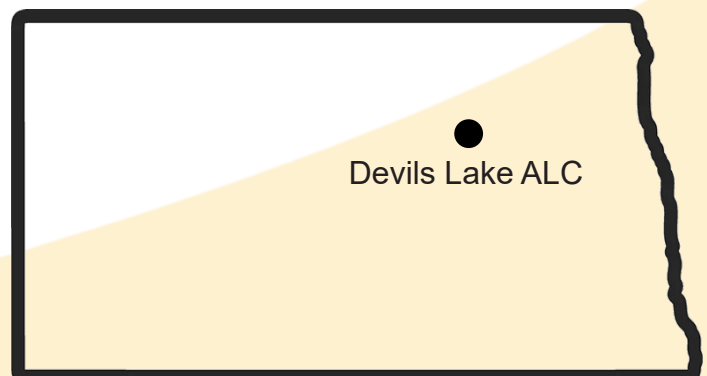


## Jessica's Advice

"Don't put off getting your GED for fear of not being able to do it. Dedicate yourself to the program, put in the time, and you will reach your goal!"

## Fact

*You can find a phlebotomist job in a variety of places, including hospitals, clinical laboratories, physicians' offices, and even in veterinary medicine. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates that employment in medical and clinical laboratories will increase by 19% by 2024, suggesting an excellent job outlook. According to the BLS, phlebotomists' median salary is \$31,690 per year.*



# Shania

**Belcourt Adult Learning Center, Region III  
2024 GED Graduate**

## Her Story

Shania attended the program at Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC) in Belcourt, North Dakota. She is a 24-old single mom, and her girls were the biggest inspiration for getting back into school. Shania came to TMCC years ago to work on her GED, but life happened. She tried every chance she got, but not being in school for so long, she became discouraged. She moved away to try for a better life. Shania still felt like she failed because she never graduated from high school and hadn't succeeded in getting her GED. This kept her thinking, "Am I going to live the rest of my life wishing I had finished?" Shania moved back home to try again.

One day, when she was leaving for an appointment, she started getting anxious. She felt like her brain and body were telling her what to do next. She was at a stop and needed to decide whether she would turn left toward home or turn right toward Belcourt. Something said inside, "You've got more you've got to take care of." She followed that feeling, turned toward Belcourt, and signed up to start work on her GED.

After those first two weeks, she felt like a new person. She felt good going to class, because every day she was greeted by staff, "Good morning! You ready to get that diploma?" and "I knew you were going to pass that test – you're so smart!" Hearing this helped her feel proud of herself.

## Next Steps

Shania received her GED and said she couldn't have done it without all the positive support from family and instructors. A huge



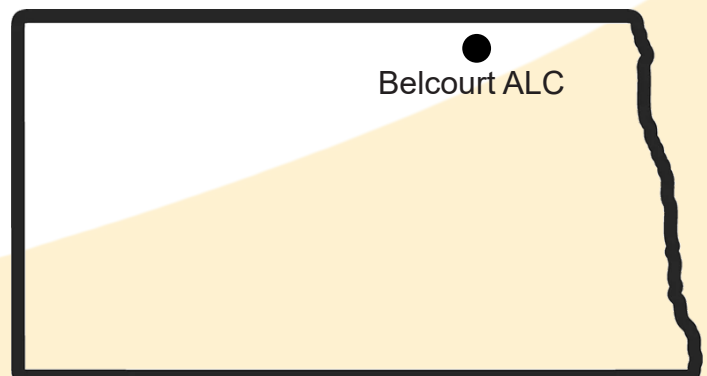
thanks to Sandi and the staff for all their help and positive support! "After all these years of trying over and over, they finally got to see me graduate and continue to college!"

## Shania's Advice

"Coming to TMCC's Belcourt adult education program was a smart choice for me, because now I have my GED and even found my passion for learning again!"

## Fact

*Every mother who participates in adult education breaks intergenerational cycles of poverty. Research shows that a mother's reading level is the greatest determinant of a child's future academic success, outweighing every other factor including poverty (coabe.org).*



# Yuna

**Grand Forks Adult Learn Center, Region IV  
2024 EL Student**

## Her Story

Yuna's husband's job in the military brought her to the U.S. She did not have any friends in Grand Forks for a while. Yuna met others in the Adult Learning Center. She said it was nice to have friends from different countries through classes. As she went to class, it helped her learn English, make new friends, and feel more independent.



## Next Steps

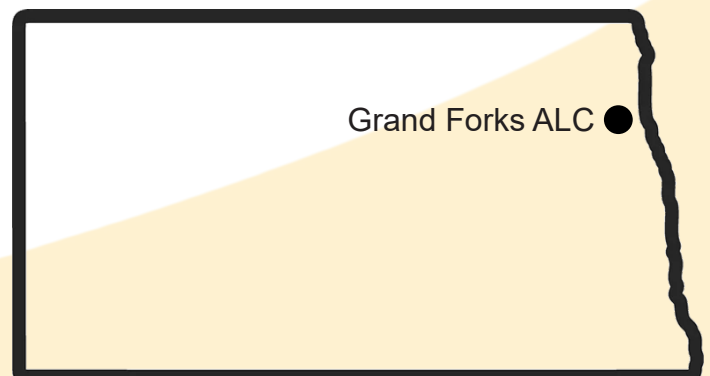
Yuna's goals are to take a class for her certificate in English and to receive a job in the U.S.

## Yuna's Advice

Yuna was nervous to attend classes at first, but the class was a safe place to learn English with people from different backgrounds. "It is okay to be scared. At least try something you feel safe with, or you like first. It will show you a new world!"

## Fact

*Adult Education helps train immigrants to join and contribute to the workforce (coabe.org). North Dakota has an Office of Legal Immigration. The four key objectives they have is to attract and retain global talent, empower businesses and communities, foster integration, and provide statewide coordination with immigration-related activities, connecting stakeholders across state agencies, the governor's office, and the legislative body. The office will provide ongoing support and participation in the North Dakota Global Talent Task Force.*





# Izzy

## Grand Forks Adult Learning Center, Region IV 2024 GED Graduate

### Her Story

As a young child, Izzy experienced multiple traumatic experiences. After missing most of kindergarten, she was adopted at age seven and began attending school regularly. In first grade, Izzy received 36 office referrals in 30 days of school. She has dealt with mental health struggles, such as bipolar disorder, throughout her life. She and her family sought healing at several sites. Poor attendance at traditional and alternative high schools made progress toward her diploma difficult. In 2019, Izzy made her first attempt at earning her GED, and in 2023 she re-enrolled for a second, successful attempt.

Understandably, Izzy had significant gaps in her learning upon enrollment. Both her math and reading levels were low. Through regular attendance and hard work, she made level gains in both subjects and earned her GED.

Izzy would be the first to admit that the process was not easy. She had to retake the reading test twice and the science test four times. Although there were setbacks and tears, Izzy would reset herself, stop for a fancy coffee, and come back to try again. Izzy was good at advocating for herself by pinpointing exactly what she needed more practice on. "I know we covered this, but I need a few more examples of this kind of problem." Or "Oh, this is like that problem we did a little while ago, right?" Izzy is proud of sharing this story because of the appropriate medical care and perseverance she has learned.



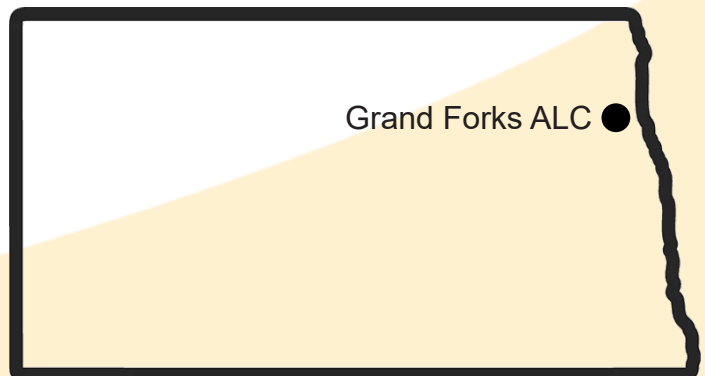
position because of her medical history, but, despite setbacks, she works full time and still has her eye on her dream to become a flight attendant and travel the world.

### Fact

*An estimated 2.5% of U.S. adults experience bipolar disorder at some time in their lives (Mental Health America). In the U.S. and other countries, it's illegal to discriminate against workers for having a mental health condition. Knowing your workplace rights can help navigate difficult conversations (Heathline).*

### Next Steps

Izzy earned her GED. Her diagnosis continues to impact her employment options. She shared that she was disqualified for a



# Josie

**Fargo Adult Learning Center, Region V  
2024 EL Student**

## Her Story

Josie and her husband, Charles, came to the U.S. in June 2022 with their son, Esmael. They traveled from Haiti and connected with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (Global Refuge) through the Haitian Parole Program. This was the start of a journey for both Josie and Charles, becoming successfully employed and having their own housing.

The Fargo Adult Learning Center has seen Josie and Charles through many challenging seasons of life, from arriving with little resources, waiting more than 18 months for social security numbers and work authorizations, unexpected loss of public assistance, and their son having a significant medical crisis.

Through all the trials and triumphs, Josie and Charles have been positive, faithful attenders, and willing to work with a multitude of different community programs. The ALC strives to help students connect to community resources to break down barriers like transportation and childcare. In addition to working with Global Refuge, Charles also worked with Job Service ND (JSND) in their New American Employment Program to become successfully employed at Sam's Club while Josie has a job in housekeeping. Global Refuge Community Connectors and JSND Refugee Case Managers both co-locate at the Fargo ALC.

Through those connections that happen at the ALC, both Josie and Charles have worked alternating hours so that they are able to care for their child, come to school, and continue to have Esmael in Even Start Family Literacy program.



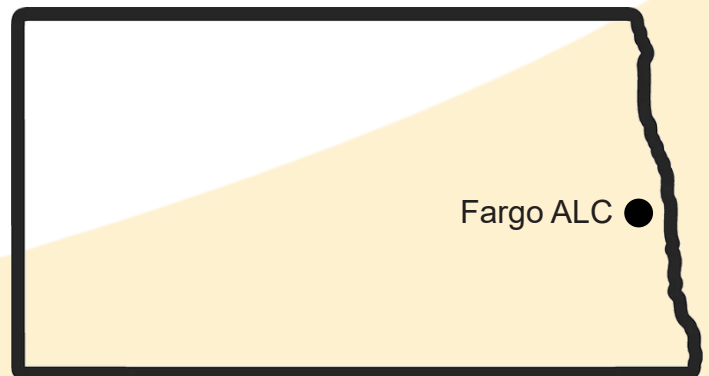
gaining English skills, and their son is thriving in the Even Start Family Literacy preschool setting. Their goals are to become self-sufficient as they build a strong foundation for their future.

## Josie's Advice

"Keep working hard."

## Fact

*The Even Start Family Literacy program provides educational opportunities for children from birth through age 5 during the school year and up to age 7 in the summer school session. This program is a partnership between Fargo Public Schools and the United Way. Children can engage in age-appropriate learning opportunities to gain kindergarten readiness skills while their parents are attending the GED or EL classes at the Fargo ALC. There is also a family classroom to support teen parents.*



## Next Steps

Both Josie and Charles are employed,

# Abigail

Valley City Adult Learning Center, Region VI  
2024 GED Graduate

## Her Story

Abigail's journey started in 6th grade, when she began to struggle in school. She moved to North Dakota from North Carolina, so everything was new to her. She felt out of place. She didn't feel like she fit in with her peers, and she had very few friends. Abigail's mental health and grades started to decline. Every parent teacher conference and IEP meeting was the same. Her parents were told she was smart, that she did great on tests, but she didn't turn in any work and her grades struggled because of it. Her parents and teachers tried so hard to help her, but none of it worked. Eventually Abigail started skipping school. She begged her parents to do something different, to switch to homeschooling, online school, or even just giving up and dropping out. It came to the point where she'd considered taking her own life just to not have to attend school anymore.

In her junior year of high school, her mom dropped Abigail out of high school. After a week of being dropped out, she started working toward her GED. The Adult Learning Center was a better fit for her than high school. Abigail felt more independent and like her education was in her own hands. Her mental health was slowly improving when coming to class, and while she still had some downs, she felt much better when coming to class. After only a few weeks, she passed all of her GED tests and got her diploma.

## Next Steps

Abigail hopes to attend North Dakota State University soon and to major in veterinary technology and a minor in zoology. She aspires to work with big cats at the zoo.

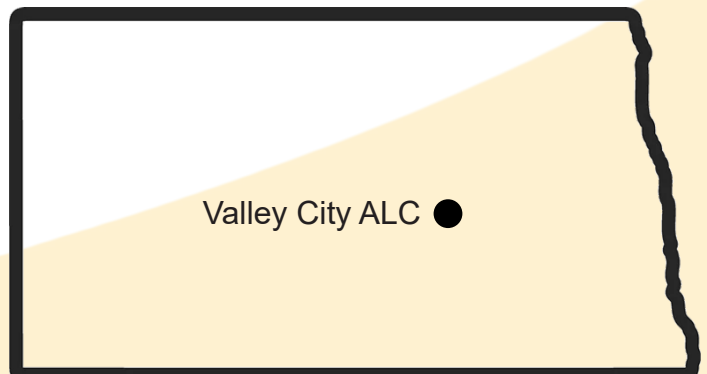


## Abigail's Advice

"Don't give up on your dreams or yourself. Never doubt yourself! You are capable of amazing things."

## Fact

*Adults with a high school degree were more likely to work full time and average 20% higher earnings (\$30,000), well above the poverty line for a family of four (coabe.org).*



# Sydne

**Jamestown Adult Learning Center, Region VI  
2024 GED Graduate**

## Her Story

Sydne Koppang came to the Jamestown Adult Learning Center because she could not focus well on school and thought earning her GED would be quicker and easier.

## Next Steps

Since earning her GED, Sydne started working full time as a direct support professional and became a mother to a beautiful baby boy.



## Sydne's Advice

Her advice to future and current students is, "Try your best and take your time."

## Fact

*Low-skilled adults are two times more likely to be unemployed; three times more likely to be in poverty; four times more likely to be in poor health; and eight times more likely to be incarcerated. Educating adults helps families break out of intergenerational poverty and creates stronger communities (coabe.org).*

Jamestown ALC ●



# Hasan

*Bismarck Adult Learning Center, Region VII  
2024 GED Graduate*

## His Story

“During my freshman year at New Town High School, I left school due to being culturally lost and struggling with an alcohol addiction. I was raised in a good home that taught me my culture, however, due to historical trauma this was limited. When I was 17 years old, I went to Job Corps in Minot. My struggles with alcohol continued. These addiction struggles kept me from reaching my goal of graduating from high school and other life goals. Finally, I asked and prayed for help. I went to the Good Road Recovery Center for treatment. Gratefully, I have finished the recovery program, and I have been going about life with prayer and sobriety now for over two years, since February 7, 2022! I currently live and work with the MHA Sober Living and Good Road Recovery Center in Bismarck. Earning my GED was a requirement I wanted to meet as part of my recovery.”



## Fact

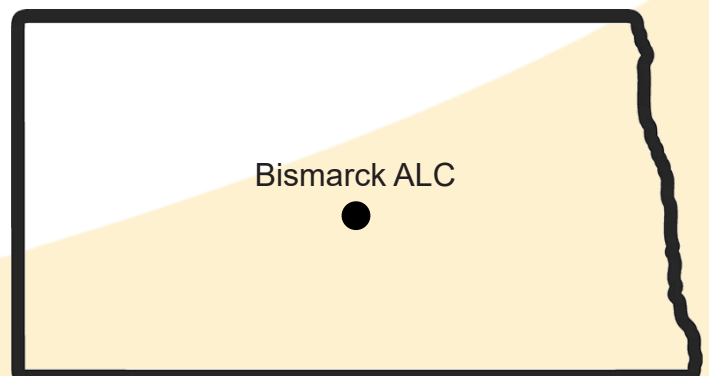
*Good Road Recovery Center is a licensed substance use disorder treatment program owned and operated by the Three Affiliated Tribes. The Good Road Recovery Center Program Director and the MHA Nation Tribal Business Council are responsible for the oversight and conduct of the Good Road Recovery Center ([goodroadrecovery.com](http://goodroadrecovery.com)).*

## Next Steps

Hasan continues to work at the MHA Sober Living and Good Road Recovery Center. He also continues to learn more of the cultural and tribal ways of the MHA Nation.

## Hasan's Advice

“You need to get your GED to move forward in today's society. Use your self-discipline, study hard, and pray in a good way.”



# Lucrecia

*Dickinson Adult Learning Center, Region VIII  
2024 EL Student*

## Her Story

The Dickinson ALC offers a variety of services to students, including GED and English language classes, as well as a preparation class for civics and citizenship.

The process of becoming a U.S. citizen is neither quick nor easy. The most recent citizen at the Dickinson ALC is EL student Lucrecia, who passed her interview in February. Lucrecia is a busy mom of five, works full time for Fisher Industries, and attends English class four days a week. Lucrecia is originally from Mexico and came to the U.S. for a safer future for her children and herself. She wanted to become a U.S. citizen because, in her words, "I want to vote and want to help when the country requires my help. I want to participate. And I want to be legal in this country because my children and I live here."

Lucrecia also views Dickinson as a positive place to live. "I really like the education for my children and the job opportunities. I was able to buy my own house. There is no pollution, and I like nature and the lake. The city is small, but I feel at home."

School has been beneficial to Lucrecia, as she now feels more confident communicating with her children's teachers, the doctor, her boss, and fellow co-workers. "I have learned a lot and feel very happy that I can be independent and do not need a translator."

Lucrecia studied citizenship with her teachers at the Dickinson ALC.

## Next Steps

To continue studying English, working hard at her job, and providing for her family.



## Lucrecia's Advice

"Every student should always go to English class every day to learn. This will help in the future, for talking with your doctor, for talking with the children's teacher, for more opportunities."

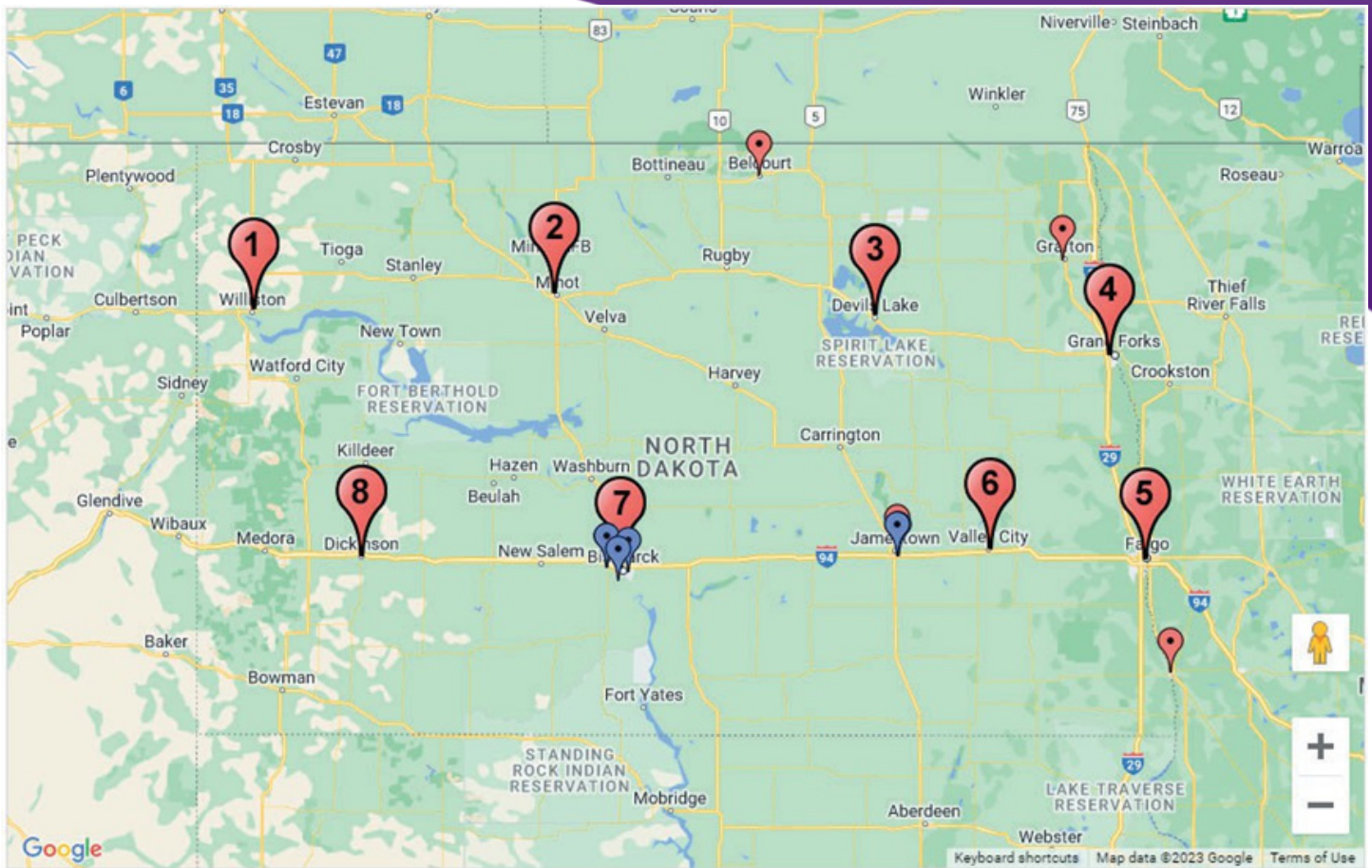
## Fact

*English learners are important to the job market. Immigrants make up for the decline in the U.S-born workforce as Baby Boomers retire. By 2030, it is estimated that nearly one in five U.S. workers will be an immigrant. However, nearly 20 million adults have limited English proficiency. We must train and educate these adults by increasing their English language proficiency, improving their basic skills, and helping them achieve a high school equivalency to contribute to the workforce (coabe.org).*

Dickinson ALC



# Map of Adult Learning Center Locations



*Each region of North Dakota has a main Adult Learning Center. Some also have satellite locations.*



# Sites Directory

## Main Sites and Satellites

### Region I

Williston Adult Learning Center  
Disability Support Services  
Williston State College  
1410 University Avenue  
Williston, ND 58801  
*Phone: (701) 774-4221*

### Region II

Minot Adult Learning Center  
1609 4th Avenue NW  
Minot, ND 58703  
*Phone: (701) 857-4488*

### Region III

Devils Lake Adult Learning Center  
Lake Region State College  
1801 College Drive North  
Devils Lake, ND 58301-1598  
*Phone: (701) 662-1536 or  
(800) 443-1313 ext. 21568*

Belcourt Adult Learning Center  
Turtle Mountain Community College  
P.O. Box 340  
Belcourt, ND 58316-0340  
*Phone: (701) 394-4306*

### Region IV

Grand Forks Adult Learning Center  
Grand Forks Public Schools  
Stanford Centre  
500 Stanford Road  
Grand Forks, ND 58203-2799  
*Phone: (701) 795-2777*

Grafton Adult Learning Center  
North Valley Adult Learning Center  
1540 School Road  
Grafton, ND 58237  
*Phone: (701) 352-3705 ext. 420*

### Region V

Fargo Adult Learning Center  
Fargo Public Schools  
1305 9th Avenue South  
Fargo, ND 58103  
*Phone: (701) 446-2806*

Wahpeton Adult Learning Center  
North Dakota State College of Science  
800 North 6th Street  
Room 420  
Wahpeton, ND 58076  
*Phone: (701) 671-2184*

### Region VI

Valley City Adult Learning Center  
Sheyenne Valley Career and Technical Center  
801 Valley Avenue SE  
Valley City, ND 58072-0030  
*Phone: (701) 845-0256*

Jamestown Adult Learning Center  
James Valley Career and Technical Center  
910 12th Avenue NE  
Jamestown, ND 58401-6513  
*Phone: (701) 845-0256*

### Region VII

Bismarck Adult Learning Center  
Bismarck State College  
1200 College Drive  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
*Phone: (701) 323-4530*

### Region VIII

Dickinson Adult Learning Center  
Dickinson Public Schools  
402 4th Street West  
Dickinson, ND 58601  
*Phone: (701) 456-0008*



# Contact Information

*NDDPI Program Staff*

Please contact the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction with questions.

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