



NORTH DAKOTA
**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

ADULT EDUCATION: THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

2025



Adult Education: The Road to Success

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preparation of this booklet.

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North Dakota Adult Education

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 the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) with any questions and feedback via email to the following address: dpidashboard@nd.gov.



What We Do

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 & 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.

Services

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 reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Workplace & Career Planning

Adult Learning Centers provide support and guidance for soft skills training, goal setting, job inventories, job applications, resumes, job search, interview practice, and connection with agencies to assist with employment. ALCs assist with a handoff with post-secondary goals if desired. Some local programs provide opportunities for workforce training in a specific occupation while obtaining a GED.

Trends & Outcomes

GED Pass Rate (2024)

North Dakota ranks among the top five states in the nation for GED performance for the fifth consecutive year. The state's current GED pass rate is 84%. In 2024, 75 percent of testers were under age 24, and 57 percent were under age 19.

A **GED Passer** is a student who has successfully passed all four official GED tests and earned a high school equivalency diploma. A **Completer** is an individual who has taken all four official GED tests, regardless of whether they passed.

GED data is reported on a calendar-year basis (January through December). The GED Pass Rate is calculated by dividing the number of Passers by the number of Completers. **All Passers are Completers, but not all Completers are Passers.**

The National Pass Rate is provided for comparison and is a key metric used by the GED Testing Service to assess testing effectiveness.

Adult Education can support the state and national economy.

- Average wage earnings increase by \$9,000 for GED exam completers.
- Average wage earnings increase by \$10,000 for every 100 hours of seat time.
- 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 is \$200 billion annually (coabe.org).

2024 GED Passers by Age (615 Total Graduates)

16-21	398
22-30	137
31-40	59
40+	21

2025 GED Passers as of May 28, 2025: 333

Partnerships That Strengthen Our Impact

Collaboration is key to the success of adult education in North Dakota. Through strong partnerships, we help learners overcome barriers, access career training, and move toward meaningful employment. These relationships connect students to essential support services, workforce opportunities, and post-secondary pathways—creating a more coordinated and effective system statewide.

Key partners include:

- 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

A list of in-demand occupations can be found on the [North Dakota Job Service website](#).

Integrated Education & Training Development

Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs were first launched using federal ESSER funds—emergency relief funding provided to states in response to the COVID-19 pandemic—to support workforce training within adult education. Due to their success, the programs transitioned to state grant funding at \$250,000 per year for the 2023–2025 biennium.

IET offerings included Intro to CNA/CNA, Phlebotomy Technician, Commercial Driver's License (CDL), Heavy Equipment Operator, and Paraeducator–Introduction to Education, among others.

While dedicated state IET funding is no longer available, local adult education programs continue to partner with area employers and Job Service North Dakota (JSND) to align services with high-demand occupations and expand workforce opportunities for adult learners across the state.

Our Impact in Action

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) continues to show a strong correlation between educational attainment, earnings, and employment outcomes. As education levels increase, unemployment rates decline and median weekly earnings rise.

In 2024, workers aged 25 and older without a high school diploma or GED had the highest unemployment rate (6.2%) and the lowest median weekly earnings (\$738). Conversely, individuals with graduate degrees experienced the lowest unemployment rates and the highest earnings. ("Education Pays, 2024," Career Outlook, BLS)

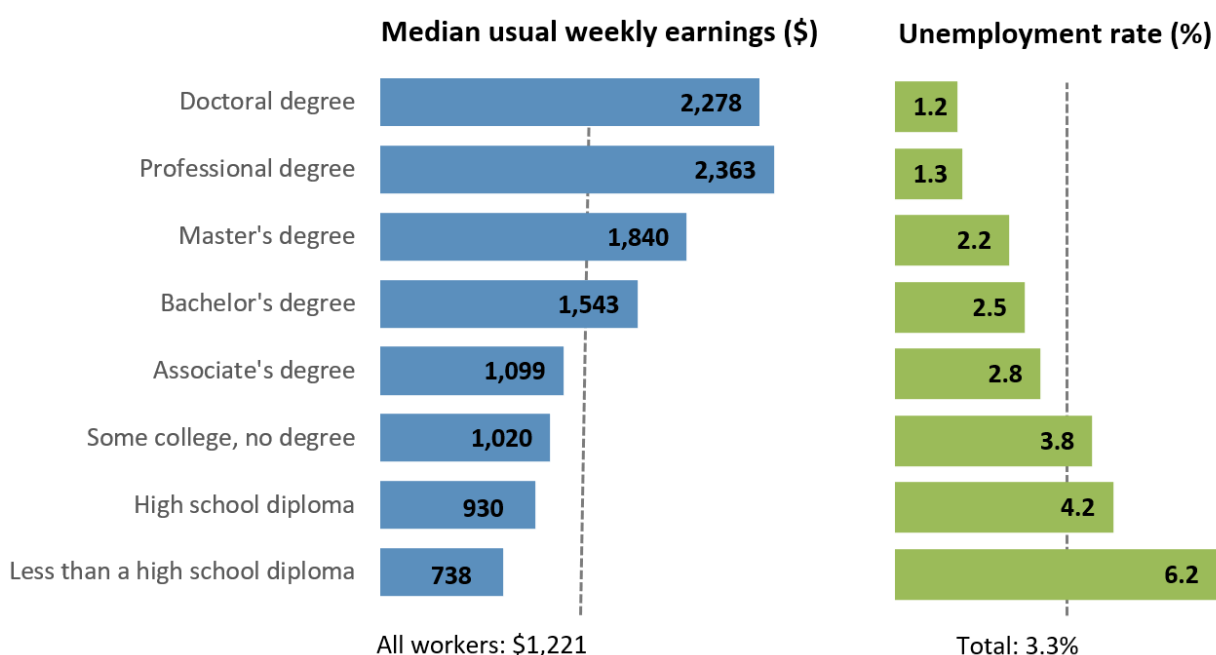
Job growth remains stagnant or negative for those without college education, according to recent BLS findings. Low-income students face significantly higher dropout rates—2.4 times that of middle-income peers and 10 times that of high-income students—highlighting persistent educational inequities.

Adult education plays a critical role in closing the skills gap between workforce needs and available talent, particularly when funding levels meet program demand. Employers increasingly collaborate with adult education providers to design training aligned with regional labor market needs.

From March 2023 to March 2024, real average hourly earnings for all employees increased by 0.6%. With no change in the average workweek, real average weekly earnings also rose 0.6%. (BLS, April 10, 2024)

As of May 2025, North Dakota's not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.1%, down from the previous month and equal to the rate one year prior. The seasonally adjusted rate was 2.5%, well below the national rate of 4.2%. (North Dakota Labor Market Information, June 24, 2025)

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2024



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.

Voices of Success

Cali

Devils Lake ALC (Region 3)

When Cali enrolled in the Devils Lake ALC program in April 2024 at just 17 years old, her initial assessment scores were below GED-ready levels, particularly in reading. But right from the start, she showed remarkable determination. She focused on building her reading skills and set an ambitious goal: to pass her first official GED test in social studies before summer break.

When school resumed in August, Cali returned with the same consistency and drive. She passed her final official test and earned her GED in October 2024. The growth she demonstrated in such a short time is a clear reflection of her hard work, focus, and resilience.

Cali was responsible for managing her own academic progress while also navigating real-life responsibilities. She supported herself by maintaining a job, all while staying committed to her education. Her maturity and self-direction were impressive—especially for someone her age.

Not only has Cali opened new doors for herself in terms of employment, but she has also set a powerful example for other young people facing similar challenges. She is living proof that determination and consistency can lead to life-changing outcomes. Cali never walked through the door without a positive attitude, a smile, and her quick sense of humor. She was a joy to work with. But beyond those uplifting qualities, she stayed focused, communicated exceptionally well with staff, and took ownership of her responsibilities. Her presence truly lifted those around her.

With her unwavering work ethic and inspiring attitude, there's no doubt that Cali will continue to thrive in whatever goals she chooses to pursue. She never lost sight of her commitment to finish what she started.



Next Steps

Cali has positioned herself for more stable, better-paying job opportunities. Currently, she is interested in earning her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) license. Looking ahead, she hopes to attend college and pursue a degree in nursing. Cali is passionate about helping and caring for others, and she sees a future in a profession that allows her to do just that.

Cali's Advice

"Don't put off getting your GED, just get it done!"

Dalila

Minot ALC (Region 2)

Dalila came to the United States at age 17 as the daughter of Mexican parents. When she first arrived, she didn't speak any English. She initially lived in Texas before relocating to Minot, where she enrolled at the Minot Adult Learning Center to begin learning the language.

Dalila made rapid progress in her English skills. Her improvement was so impressive that her English learner instructors encouraged her to enroll in GED classes, which are taught entirely in English. Although she found the coursework challenging and still felt uncertain about her English abilities, Dalila's determination carried her through. She successfully passed all four sections of the GED exam, which

she was able to complete in her native language, Spanish.

Dalila also participated in the Certified Nursing Assistant course offered through the center's Integrated Education and Training program. She excelled in the course, quickly mastering the skills and knowledge needed for a career in healthcare.

Her story is a powerful example of perseverance, growth, and a genuine love of learning. The Minot Adult Learning Center staff is incredibly proud of Dalila's accomplishments and looks forward to seeing all that she will achieve in the future.



Next Steps

While Dalila hasn't defined her next steps yet, she feels confident and ready to take on whatever challenges come her way.

Delila's Advice

"Do not be afraid to face new challenges. You must persevere to achieve what you want, even if it is difficult sometimes."

Daymon

Dickinson ALC (Region 8)

Daymon's educational journey didn't follow a traditional path—but his persistence, growth, and determination make his story truly inspiring.

Throughout school, Daymon struggled with anxiety in classroom settings. Though bright and kind-hearted, he found the traditional school environment overwhelming, which led to challenges in middle school and beyond. He left high school during his sophomore year and spent time working and managing life's responsibilities before deciding to take a new direction.

In October 2022, Daymon enrolled at the Dickinson Adult Learning Center to pursue his GED. Balancing a full-time job and a demanding schedule, he faced many obstacles—but never gave up. His intelligence, positive attitude, and commitment carried him through. In December 2024, after more than two years of hard work, Daymon proudly earned his GED diploma.



Next Steps

Daymon works at an autobody and sandblasting business and is embracing a new role as a father.

Daymon's Advice

"Go to an Adult Learning Center. Stay on it as best you can. Take your time, ask questions, and keep at it."

Diana

Grand Forks ALC (Region 4)



At just 10 years old, Diana was forced to flee Syria due to war, finding refuge in Lebanon. Despite the immense challenges, she clung to her dreams—especially of becoming an architect, a passion she shared with her mother. But in Lebanon, Syrian refugees were barred from completing their education. Diana's future began to feel out of reach, but she didn't give up.

A new opportunity arose when she was accepted as a refugee in the U.S. After overcoming entry barriers, Diana arrived in 2023. Though she was 20 years old and still learning English, she was determined to continue her education. With support from Global Friends and the guidance of her teacher, Angie, Diana persevered—and ultimately passed the GED program.

Next Steps

Diana is set to study engineering in college.

Diana's Advice

"Don't stop until you're proud of yourself. Keep pushing forward; your perseverance will pay off, and your story will surely inspire others!"

Jarvis

Watford City ALC (Region 1)



When Jarvis enrolled at the Adult Learning Center in Watford City, he wasn't confident in his academic skills. "There was so much I didn't know in math, English, social studies, and science," he shared. But he had a clear goal: earn his

GED and go to trade school for welding.

Jarvis had dropped out of school at 16, thinking he had life figured out. Years of addiction and alcoholism humbled him—but everything changed on February 23, 2023, when he got clean and committed to recovery. In 2024, he joined the GED program and began attending class every Tuesday and Thursday, all while working full-time at Jack & Jill's to make ends meet.

"I asked a lot of questions, even if I thought they were dumb," he said. "Lauren always helped me understand." Despite anxiety and self-doubt that followed him into every pretest, Jarvis pushed through—and kept surprising himself. One by one, he passed each subject: social studies, English, science, and finally, math.

"The math test had my anxiety at an all-time high," he admitted. "But

Lauren reassured me, and I trusted her. I passed."

Jarvis credits his success to the unwavering support of his teachers, his recovery community, and his family. "A dream came true because of those factors—and because I trusted the process."

Now, with a GED in hand and trade school on the horizon, Jarvis's story is a powerful testament to resilience, growth, and second chances.

Next Steps

Jarvis will attend Williston State College this fall to study welding.

Jarvis' Advice

"Ask for help if you don't understand a subject and use the tools that staff recommend."

Kat

Jamestown ALC (Region 6)



Kat came to the Jamestown Adult Learning Center determined to make something of herself—seeing it as the first step toward a better future. But her journey wasn't easy. She faced significant challenges, including homelessness, job instability, mental health struggles, and addiction. Her greatest obstacle, however, was herself and the unseen boundaries she had unknowingly set.

Today, Kat proudly celebrates her sobriety from alcohol and pills—a milestone she considers one of the most meaningful victories in her life.

Earning her GED was a full-circle moment—something she once thought impossible. "It felt surreal, and it's definitely a feeling I won't forget," she shared. Kat described the ALC environment as "super fun and welcoming," a place where she

finally felt safe—something she hadn't experienced often.

She credits Mr. Miller's consistent support as a life-changing influence. His encouragement helped reshape how she sees herself and the world around her.

"Working with him was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life," she said. "It's not something I'll ever forget."

Next Steps

Kat plans to continue her education and achieve her goal of completing college.

Kat's Advice

"When you're struggling to keep your head above water, sometimes all it takes is to relax—you might find you're floating all along."

Keanu

Minot ALC (Region 2)

Keanu was born and raised in South Africa, where he faced many hardships growing up. One of the greatest challenges was being unable to complete his education. Like many in similar circumstances, he began working at a young age to help support his family—taking on odd jobs and eventually agricultural work to make ends meet.

A life-changing opportunity came when Keanu moved to Minot, North Dakota, to work in agriculture. It was a major transition, but one he embraced with hope and determination. After getting married, his focus shifted to the

immigration process. Though he was unable to work during that time, Keanu chose to see it not as a setback but as an opportunity.

He used that season to pursue something he once thought was out of reach: his education. Earning a GED became a personal goal—and an investment in his family's future. He knew that completing his education would open new doors and give him a stronger foundation to provide for his loved ones.

Keanu's journey has been full of challenges, but each has offered a lesson. He believes that life is shaped not by what we endure, but by how we choose to grow from it. Today, Keanu faces the future with resilience and determination, knowing that every step he's taken has made him stronger and more focused than ever.

Next Steps

Keanu earned admission to Arkansas State University Beebe and secured a sponsorship from Gooseneck Implement. He was accepted into the program while working full-time as an agricultural equipment technician at the Gooseneck in Minot.

Keanu's Advice

"The level of your success is determined almost solely by how badly you want it."



Page

Bismarck ALC (Region 7)



Page, a member of the Three Affiliated Tribes from New Town, North Dakota, faced significant challenges when she began working toward her GED. Pregnant and exhausted, she still pushed herself to attend class every day. At the same time, Page was adjusting to life in recovery.

"It was very hard," she said. "I had bad days, but I kept going because I wanted better not only for myself, but for my son."

After giving birth, she didn't let motherhood slow her down. She brought her newborn to class with

her, and on the day he turned one month old, she passed her final GED test.

"I was shocked and super proud," she said. "All that hard work paid off!"

Next Steps

Page plans to attend United Tribes Technical College in the fall.

Page's Advice

"Stay open-minded, be willing to learn, and always believe in yourself. Never give up!"

Paige

NDDOCR

"It was stressful at times, and there were plenty of ups and downs. Math was my least favorite subject, but I'm proud I got it done," Paige shared.

Paige's educational path was anything but smooth. After dropping out of Bismarck High School, she enrolled at South Central in Bismarck—but quickly realized that wasn't the right fit either. She started spending time with the wrong crowd and began to drift off course. In 2019, her family encouraged her to move to Mississippi to live with her aunt and finish school. There, she was homeschooled and completed both her junior and senior years.

Five months later, Paige returned to Bismarck—only to find out that none of her Mississippi credits would transfer. It was a crushing blow. "It felt like all the work I'd done was for nothing," she said. Disheartened, she tried returning to South Central, but

within weeks, she fell back into old habits and eventually stopped going altogether. That's when she shifted her focus to earning her GED.

Paige's grandmother encouraged her to consider returning to school for her diploma, especially since she only needed about 2½ to 3 credits to graduate. But by the time Paige was ready to act, she had turned 21—no longer eligible to return to high school. The GED became her only path forward.

Things took another turn when Paige was arrested on new charges after a night out drinking. Her probation was revoked, and she was sent to the Dakota Women's Correctional and Rehabilitation Center (DWCRC). What could have been a low point became a turning point.

"Being at DWCRC gave me the opportunity I needed," Paige said. "I always said I'd get my GED, but I didn't know if I'd follow through. This time, I did."

Next Steps

Paige plans to attend college to pursue a nursing degree and work in a hospital. Her goal is to build a safe, stable life for herself—with a little extra security for the future.

Paige's Advice

"It's okay to fall, just make sure to get back up"



Paiton

Bismarck ALC (Region 7)

Paiton's parents divorced when she was a baby, leading to many changes for her and her sister. The two often felt caught in the middle of their parents' conflicts, creating a challenging home environment.

Paiton faced frequent bullying throughout school. At age 12, she and her sister moved in full time with their dad, who had since remarried and had two additional children. The adjustment was difficult, and during this time, Paiton began to struggle with her mental health, eventually turning to substance use as a way to cope.

After several setbacks and time spent in treatment programs, Paiton attempted to live with her mom and stepfather, but that arrangement also proved unsuccessful. Ultimately, she moved in with her aunt and uncle—a turning point in her life.

With her parents no longer able to manage her mental and behavioral challenges, her aunt and uncle stepped in to offer support. Their home provided the stability Paiton needed. She returned to treatment, found a job, reconnected with friends, and began working toward her GED. While she still experienced ups and downs, her mental health improved significantly.

Paiton enrolled at the Adult Learning Center in August 2024 and proudly passed her final GED test—math—in September 2024.



Next Steps

Paiton plans to continue writing stories—and possibly a novel. She will keep working, healing, and eventually plans to attend Bismarck State College to study something related to English or writing. Right now, she's prioritizing her mental health and making sure she's in a good place before taking her next big step.

Paiton's Advice

"Even when life is hard, which it will be, you always need to hold onto hope. Even if you don't think you can do it, try. Try your best every day; whether your best is 10% or 90% effort, do your best. Life will always have ups and downs, but if you can take control and accomplish at least one thing, even if it's just getting out of bed that day, you're succeeding."



Reech

Fargo ALC (Region 5)

Reech joined the Fargo Adult Learning Center in January 2025 and earned his GED later that same year. From day one, he stood out as a dedicated and consistent student, attending class regularly and taking his studies seriously.

Even after starting a new job, Reech remained committed to his education—attending class once a week and continuing to study independently from home. His determination paid off: he achieved

college-ready scores on the GED exam and even earned credit in math, reflecting both his academic ability and discipline.

In addition to his studies, Reech partnered with a TRIO program advisor to prepare for college admissions, taking meaningful steps toward his future.

Next Steps

Reech is passionate about earning a degree in petroleum engineering and has already taken concrete steps to pursue that goal.

Taras

Wahpeton ALC (Region 5)

Taras came to the U.S. from Ukraine after war broke out in February 2022.

"Not so long ago, I didn't think I would end up in the U.S.," he said. "Circumstances beyond our control can radically change our lives, but it's important to quickly adjust our goals and plans—and keep moving forward no matter what."

Taras left everything behind and made a long journey through Europe, eventually arriving in Wahpeton, North Dakota, with just a small bag. He was touched by the kindness of those who prepared his apartment and helped him settle into his new home.

Shortly after his arrival, Taras began attending the Wahpeton Adult Learning Center at North Dakota State College of Science to

improve his English. He says the instructors not only helped him with language skills but also supported him through the many challenges of adapting to a new life.

When staff at the learning center learned of his goal to earn a North Dakota commercial driver's license (CDL), they referred him to Job Service North Dakota. Taras applied for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding—and was thrilled to learn he qualified. With those funds, he was able to enroll in the CDL program at NDSCS during the summer.

The support he received fueled his motivation.

"The help I got from the Wahpeton Adult Learning Center and Job Service gave me even more motivation to study," he said. "I didn't want to let down the people who believed in me."

Taras worked hard, successfully completing the course and earning

his CDL. Today, he is proud to be working as a truck driver for Minn-Dak in Wahpeton.



Taras' Advice

"Never be afraid to face hard challenges or make bold decisions. Changing where you live, your profession, your workplace—even learning a new language or culture—always leads to growth."

Directory

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Region I

Williston Adult Learning Center

Williston State College
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Williston, ND 58801
Phone: (701) 774-6236

Watford City Adult Learning Center

2112 Wolves Den Parkway
Watford City, ND 58854
Phone: (701) 774-6236

Region II

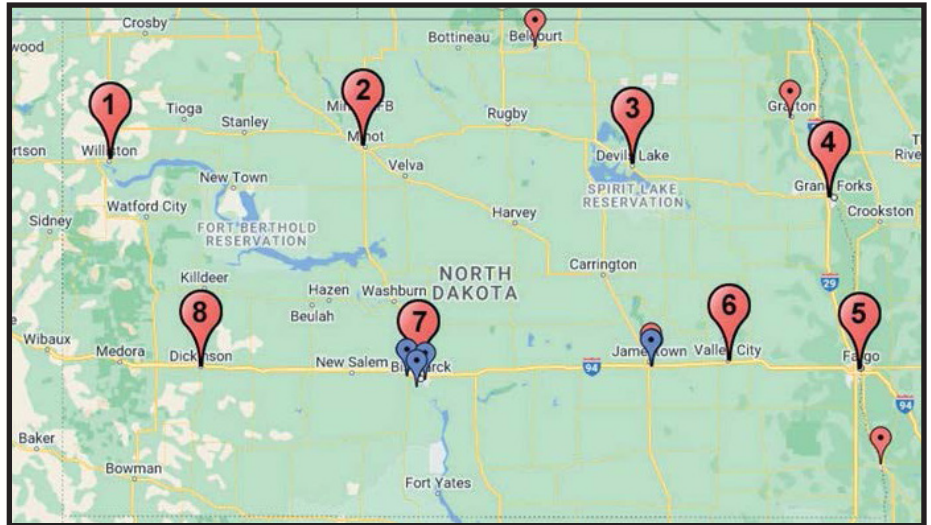
Minot Adult Learning Center

Minot Public Schools
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 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

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) 409-0285

Region VI

Valley City Adult Learning Center

Sheyenne Valley Career & Tech Center
801 Valley Avenue SE
Valley City, ND 58072-0030
Phone: (701) 845-0256

Jamestown Adult Learning Center

James Valley Career & Tech Center
910 12th Avenue NE
Jamestown, ND 58401-6513
Phone: (701) 845-0256

Region VII

Bismarck Adult Learning Center

Bismarck Public Schools
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



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