

CHAPTER 54-60

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

54-60-01. Definitions.

In this chapter, unless the context or subject matter otherwise requires:

1. "Cabinet" means the North Dakota commerce cabinet.
2. "Commissioner" means the commissioner of commerce.
3. "Department" means the department of commerce.
4. "Foundation" means the North Dakota economic development foundation.

54-60-02. Department of commerce - Divisions.

The North Dakota department of commerce is created.

1. The department must consist of:
 - a. A division of community services;
 - b. A division of economic development and finance;
 - c. A division of tourism;
 - d. A division of workforce development; and
 - e. Any division or office the commissioner determines necessary to carry out this chapter.
2. The commissioner shall appoint the director of each division of the department. Each director appointed by the commissioner serves at the pleasure of the commissioner and is entitled to receive a salary set by the commissioner within the limits of legislative appropriations.

54-60-03. Commissioner of commerce - Duties.

With the advice and counsel of the North Dakota development foundation, the governor shall appoint a commissioner to supervise, control, and administer the department. The commissioner serves at the pleasure of the governor and receives a salary set by the governor within the limits of legislative appropriations. The commissioner:

1. Shall file an oath of office in the usual form before commencing to perform the duties of the commissioner;
2. Shall serve as chairman of the cabinet;
3. Shall appoint personnel as may be determined necessary to carry out the duties of the department;
4. Shall manage the operations of the department and oversee each of the divisions;
5. Shall assume central responsibilities to develop, implement, and coordinate a working network of commerce service providers;
6. Shall coordinate the department's services with commerce-related services of other state agencies;
7. Shall advise and cooperate with departments and agencies of the federal government and of other states; private businesses, agricultural organizations, and associations; research institutions; and with any individual or other private or public entity;
8. May enter contracts upon terms and conditions as determined by the commissioner to be reasonable and to effectuate the purposes of this chapter;
9. Shall report between the first and tenth legislative days of each regular legislative session to a standing committee of each house of the legislative assembly as determined by the legislative management and shall report annually to the foundation:
 - a. On the department's goals and objectives since the last report;
 - b. On the department's goals and objectives for the period until the next report;
 - c. On the department's long-term goals and objectives;
 - d. On the department's activities and measurable results occurring since the last report; and
 - e. On commerce benchmarks, including the average annual wage in the state, the gross state product exclusive of agriculture, and the number of primary sector jobs in the state;

10. May not certify as a primary sector business a compassion center registered under chapter 19-24.1;
11. Shall adopt rules necessary to implement this chapter; and
12. May take any actions necessary and proper to implement this chapter.

54-60-04. North Dakota economic development foundation - Executive committee - Duties.

The North Dakota economic development foundation is created.

1. The foundation is composed of a minimum of fifteen and a maximum of thirty members appointed by the governor for two-year terms, except the governor shall appoint approximately one-half of the initial foundation members to one-year terms in order to initiate a cycle of staggered terms. Appointment of the foundation members must ensure a cross section of business, tourism, and economic development representation, and must ensure that at least one member represents rural concerns.
2. The foundation members shall elect an executive committee with a minimum of five and a maximum of seven foundation members, which shall include a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, treasurer, and up to three members at large.
3. The foundation shall seek funding for administrative expenses from private sector sources and shall seek and distribute private sector funds for use in commerce-related activities of the state. The private sector funds are not public moneys for any purpose and are not subject to section 12 of article X of the Constitution of North Dakota.
4. The foundation shall:
 - a. Provide the governor advice and counsel in selecting the commissioner.
 - b. Serve in an advisory role to the commissioner.
 - c. Develop a strategic plan for economic development in the state and set accountability standards, measurements, and benchmarks to evaluate the effectiveness of the department in implementing the strategic plan.
 - d. Monitor economic development activities and initiatives of the department.
 - e. Recommend state and federal legislation relating to strengthening the state's economy and increasing the state's population.
 - f. Monitor state and federal legislation and initiatives that may impact the state's economy and population.
 - g. Serve as a source of expertise for developing public and private initiatives to strengthen the state's economy and increase the state's population.

54-60-05. Compensation and reimbursement of foundation members.

The foundation may establish the level of compensation to which a foundation member is entitled. A foundation member is entitled to reimbursement for mileage and expenses as provided for state officers.

54-60-06. Commerce cabinet.

The North Dakota commerce cabinet is created. The cabinet is composed of the directors of each of the department divisions and of the executive heads, or other authorized representatives, of the state board for career and technical education, the state board of higher education, the Bank of North Dakota, the department of agriculture, workforce safety and insurance, the department of transportation, job service North Dakota, the game and fish department, and of any other state agency appointed by the commissioner. The commissioner is the chairman of the cabinet and shall determine which agencies are members of the cabinet. The cabinet shall:

1. Coordinate and communicate economic development and tourism efforts of the agencies represented.
2. Meet at times determined by the commissioner.

54-60-07. Cooperation with other agencies or private entities to jointly publish or mail publications.

The department may cooperate with other state agencies or with a private entity for the purpose of jointly publishing or distributing information or publications as provided in section 54-06-04.3.

54-60-08. Workforce safety and insurance commerce data.

Repealed by S.L. 2005, ch. 606, § 3.

54-60-09. Division of workforce development - Duties - Report.

The division of workforce development shall:

1. Actively monitor local, regional, and national private and public workforce development initiatives.
2. Develop and implement the state's talent strategy.
3. Develop and continually refine the state workforce mission, vision, and strategies.
4. Conduct regular employer talent and skills supply and demand studies, the results of which must be reported to a standing committee of each house of the legislative assembly as determined by the legislative management during each regular legislative session.

54-60-10. Career guidance and job opportunities - Internet website - Fees - Continuing appropriation.

Repealed by S.L. 2007, ch. 493, § 9.

54-60-11. Target industries - Report to legislative council.

Repealed by S.L. 2009, ch. 480, § 16.

54-60-12. North Dakota image information program.

The commissioner shall implement a program for use by state agencies to assist state agencies and state agencies' employees to present to the public a positive image of the state. The commissioner may expand the program to include use of the program by the private sector.

54-60-13. Business hotline.

The commissioner shall create and implement a business hotline program. The program must provide for a telephone number through which the department shall provide, during regular business hours, in-state and out-of-state callers with information regarding how to do business in the state, the services and assistance available to businesses, the advantages of doing business in the state, and information on state and other resources that provide assistance to businesses in the state. In addition to directly providing information, the department may use the business hotline as a clearinghouse through which to refer callers to other federal, state, local, or private sector economic developers. The program must include an in-state and out-of-state marketing campaign in support of the program. The commissioner shall follow up on business leads gained through the program and shall gather data on the results of calls, including business expansion, location, and startup.

54-60-14. North Dakota American Indian business development office.

Repealed by S.L. 2015, ch. 5, § 4.

54-60-15. North Dakota women's business development office.

A North Dakota women's business development office is established within the department to develop and administer the North Dakota women's business program, to establish and fund the women's business leadership council, certify women-owned businesses for federal or state contracting, and to recruit, train, and assist women entrepreneurs to develop and diversify their businesses. The office must have an administrator and staff sufficient to implement the office's programs. The commissioner may contract with a third party for the provision of services for the

office. If the commissioner contracts with a third party under this section, all data and databases collected and created by the third party in performing services for the office are the property of the department and the third party.

54-60-16. International business and trade office - Advisory board.

Repealed by S.L. 2021, ch. 46, § 13.

54-60-17. Division of workforce development - Internships, apprenticeships, and work experience opportunities.

The division of workforce development shall administer a program to increase use of internships, apprenticeships, and work experience opportunities for higher education students, high school students enrolled in grade eleven or twelve, and educators. The primary focus of this program must be higher education internships in target industries. This program shall provide services to employers, communities, and business organizations to increase internship, apprenticeship, and work experience opportunities. The department shall maintain records of the number of internship, apprenticeship, and work experience opportunities subsidized within each funding recipient.

54-60-17.1. Internship fund - Continuing appropriation.

The internship fund is a special fund in the state treasury. All funds in the internship fund are appropriated to the department of commerce on a continuing basis for the purpose of implementing and administering section 54-60-17. Interest earned by the fund must be credited to the fund.

54-60-18. Division of workforce development - Career specialist.

The division of workforce development, in consultation with the department of career and technical education, job service North Dakota, and the superintendent of public instruction, shall develop and implement a program to assist public schools in promoting North Dakota career opportunities to students in grades nine through twelve.

54-60-19. Division of workforce development - Talent strategy - Performance and accountability - Report.

1. The division of workforce development, in developing and implementing the state's talent strategy, shall:
 - a. Collect data on all workforce programs administered by state agencies, including job service North Dakota, the department of career and technical education, the superintendent of public instruction, the state board of higher education, the department of health and human services, and other divisions of the department of commerce, to determine standard measurements of success and to compile and analyze the program data in a report to be provided to a standing committee of each house of the legislative assembly as determined by the legislative management during each regular legislative session.
 - b. Develop a comprehensive, consolidated biennial statewide strategic plan for the state's system for workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction.
 - c. Continuously review, identify how to improve, and implement improvements to the state's system for workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction.
 - d. Review all workforce development programs administered by state agencies for the coordination and prevention of duplication of workforce development services.
2. The division of workforce development shall develop and implement a system of performance and accountability measures for the state's system for workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction. Each partner of the state's system for workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction shall cooperate in providing the division the data necessary to implement these measures.

54-60-20. Beginning again North Dakota pilot program - Continuing appropriation - Report to legislative council.

Expired under S.L. 2007, ch. 18, § 53.

54-60-21. Workforce enhancement council.

The workforce enhancement council consists of the private sector members of the workforce development council, the director of the department of career and technical education, and the director of the division of workforce development, who shall serve as chairman.

54-60-22. Workforce enhancement council - Grants.

The workforce enhancement council shall recommend to the commissioner the approval of grants to training providers, businesses, and institutions of higher education assigned primary responsibility for workforce training in this state to be used to create or enhance training programs that address workforce needs of private sector companies. A grant made under this section may be used for curriculum development, equipment, recruitment of participants, and training and certification for instructors but may not be used to supplant funding for current operations. The department may distribute funds under this section after:

1. The division of workforce development certifies that a proposed training program meets a critical workforce shortage in a target industry or other high-demand occupation and is expected to lead to employment in this state; and
2. The proposed recipient provides the department with detailed documentation of private sector participation, including the availability of one dollar of matching funds for each dollar of state funds.

54-60-23. Workforce enhancement fund - Continuing appropriation.

The workforce enhancement fund is a special fund in the state treasury. All funds in the workforce enhancement fund are appropriated to the department of commerce on a continuing basis for the purpose of implementing and administering sections 54-60-21 and 54-60-22. Interest earned by the fund must be credited to the fund.

54-60-24. Rural development office.

1. The commissioner shall administer the rural development office. The purpose of the office is to assist in the development of rural North Dakota communities.
2. The commissioner may contract with a third party for the provision of services for the rural development office. If the commissioner contracts with a third party under this subsection, all data and databases collected and created by the third party in performing services for the office are the property of the department and the third party.
3. The department may seek and accept any gift, grant, or donation of funds, property, services, or other assistance from public or private sources for the purpose of furthering the objectives of the rural development office.

54-60-25. North Dakota rural development council - Composition.

Repealed by S.L. 2025, ch. 479, § 39.

54-60-26. Division of workforce development - Annual reports - North Dakota workforce development council - Budget acceptance.

1. Annually, job service North Dakota, the department of career and technical education, the department, and the state board of higher education each shall submit a report to the division of workforce development relating to the respective agency's current workforce initiatives and activities and that agency's plan for future workforce initiatives and activities. The division of workforce development shall consider these reports in preparing the consolidated biennial statewide strategic plan for the state's system for

workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction required under section 54-60-19.

2. Before November first of each even-numbered year, job service North Dakota, the department of career and technical education, the department, and the state board of higher education each shall present the respective agency's workforce-related budget initiatives for the upcoming biennium, including alignment of these initiatives with the consolidated biennial statewide strategic plan, to the North Dakota workforce development council, created by governor's executive order 1995-01, dated January 3, 1996. The North Dakota workforce development council members shall consider potential areas for collaboration.

54-60-27. Division of workforce development - Pilot program - Higher education electronic portfolio system.

Expired under S.L. 2011, ch. 50, § 36.

54-60-28. Uncrewed aircraft systems program - Report to legislative management.

1. The department may operate and administer an uncrewed aircraft systems test site, contingent upon receiving official designation by the federal aviation administration. The department may cooperate and contract with the university of North Dakota, the North Dakota aeronautics commission, the adjutant general, and other public or private entities as determined by the commissioner in the operation and administration of the test site. The department may charge fees sufficient to operate the test site. The department shall, to the extent possible, use competitive bidding in the operation and administration of the test site. The commissioner may charter a public corporation to operate the test site. The corporation must possess all of the powers of a business corporation consistent with this chapter. The department shall report to the legislative management semiannually on the status of the program.
2. In administering the uncrewed aircraft systems program, the uncrewed aircraft systems test site established in subsection 1 may:
 - a. Enter contracts and agreements with public, private, and nonprofit organizations for projects, activities, and research topics, and for the operation and management of a public-private partnership under chapter 48-02.1;
 - b. Enter partnerships, limited liability companies, joint ventures, or other contractual arrangements with private businesses for the purpose of business or industrial development; and
 - c. Adopt policies governing ownership or transfer of ownership rights and distribution of income that may be derived from an invention or discovery resulting from research or employment in the uncrewed aircraft systems test site.

54-60-29. Uncrewed aircraft systems program fund - Continuing appropriation.

1. There is created in the state treasury a special fund known as the uncrewed aircraft systems fund, which may be used to defray the expenses of the:
 - a. Operations of an uncrewed aircraft systems test site officially designated by the federal aviation administration;
 - b. Beyond visual line of sight uncrewed aircraft system program; and
 - c. Enhanced use lease grant program.
2. The fund consists of fees, royalties, gifts, grants, devises, bequests, donations, assignments, and other revenue collected for the administration of the test site and federal and other funds appropriated by the legislative assembly. All moneys in the fund are appropriated to the department of commerce on a continuing basis for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the programs identified in subsection 1. Interest earned on moneys in the fund must be credited to the fund.

54-60-29.1. Beyond visual line of sight uncrewed aircraft system program - Requirements - Report to legislative management.

The department may establish and administer a beyond visual line of sight uncrewed aircraft system program for the design, purchase, implementation, and operating costs of a beyond visual line of sight uncrewed aircraft system. The department may enter contracts, agreements, and contractual arrangements and adopt policies related to the beyond visual line of sight uncrewed aircraft system program in the same manner authorized for the uncrewed aircraft system program under section 54-60-28. The department shall require any entity receiving funding for this program which is operating the beyond visual line of sight uncrewed aircraft system to provide quarterly payments to the state treasurer based on a fee structure determined by the commissioner. The state treasurer shall deposit any funds received under this section in the state general fund. The department shall provide semiannual reports to the legislative management regarding the development of the beyond visual line of sight uncrewed aircraft system program and the total amount deposited by the state treasurer in the state general fund.

54-60-30. Boundary and annexation survey reporting.

At the discretion of each political subdivision, the department shall act on behalf of political subdivisions to deliver a consolidated response to the boundary and annexation survey and provide legal boundary geography data to the United States census bureau. The department shall coordinate with political subdivisions to ensure consistent, accurate, and integrated geography is provided to the United States census bureau.

54-60-31. Global talent office - Duties.

There is created a global talent office within the department of commerce. Employees of the global talent office report to the commissioner. The global talent office:

1. Shall develop and implement a statewide strategy to support businesses in recruiting and retaining foreign labor, including immigrants already in the United States and integration of immigrants into the state to promote economic opportunities for immigrant communities.
2. Shall advise and make recommendations to the governor, legislative assembly, and state agencies regarding immigrant integration and foreign labor issues.
3. Shall develop a pilot program to support businesses pursuing or employing legal immigrants and to support communities to develop immigration integration plans and activities.
4. May contract with other state agencies to develop and administer programs or services related to immigration integration and access to basic needs that promote entrance and movement throughout the workforce.
5. May contract with an organization with expertise related to the goals of the global talent office.

54-60-32. Regional planning council grants - Purpose.

The department may award grants to regional planning councils under chapter 54-40.1 to support local and regional implementation of state-authorized programs and initiatives, including housing, regional workforce, rural catalyst, local food and grocery, and other state-authorized programs, subject to legislative appropriations. The department may approve grants to support program implementation, resource development, and efforts to attract and leverage public or private investment in local and regional areas of the state.

54-60-33. Reporting requirements - Budget section - Grant programs.

The department shall compile a report regarding grant programs administered by the department, excluding federally funded programs, to be provided semiannually to the budget section. The report must include the following for each grant program:

1. The purpose of the grant program;
2. Funding history;

3. The number of days the grant application was open to applicants;
4. The name of each grant recipient and the amount of each grant award; and
5. The distribution date of grant funds or the anticipated distribution date of grant funds.