



Barriers Before the Job

A Native Workforce Perspective

NORTH
Dakota | Indian Affairs
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Understanding Native Workforce Realities

Barriers, Context, and How Employers Can Respond

- Understand Native work experiences
- Build understanding, not blame
- Improve systems together



Workforce Readiness Starts Before the Job

Basic stability

- Housing
- Utilities
- Access



Housing & Utilities Matter

- Housing and utilities are often overlooked in workforce discussions.
- They directly impact a person's ability to maintain employment.
- Without heat, water, or electricity, people are in survival mode.
- Consistent work depends on stable living conditions.

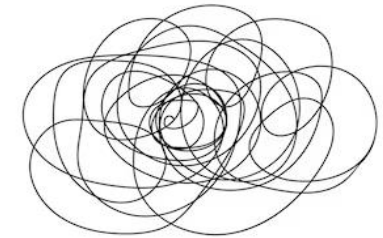
Access Comes Before Opportunity

- Jobs often require online applications and email.
- No internet or device = hard to apply.
- Broadband access is the first step to getting hired.

You Can't Plan a Career in Survival Mode

Survival Mode vs Stability

- Survival needs like housing, utilities, and food make long-term planning hard.
- Training or committing to work is difficult without stability.
- Stability allows growth, learning, and consistency.



Trust is a Workforce Issue

- Housing and utilities are often overlooked in workforce conversations.
- They directly affect a person's ability to work.
- Without heat, water, or electricity, people are in survival mode.
- Consistent work needs consistent living conditions.





Training Alone isn't Enough

- Training works best when local, flexible, and tied to real jobs.
- Transportation, childcare, and scheduling affect participation.
- One-size-fits-all training often fails.

Common Misunderstandings

- Gaps in employment are often seen as a lack of motivation.
- They're usually signs of access barriers.
- Understanding context helps employers respond better.





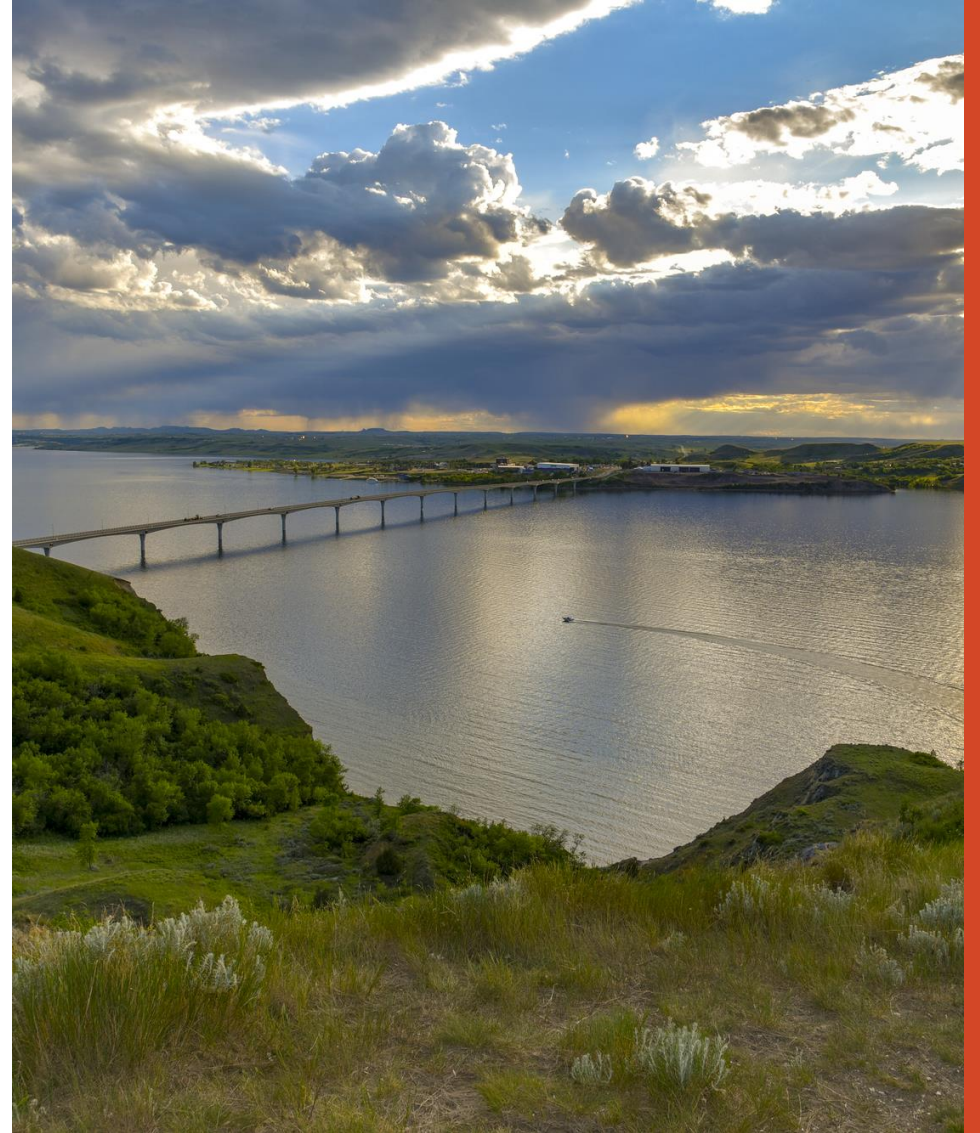
Employer Practices That Make a Difference

WHAT WORKS BETTER

- In-person or assisted applications help.
- Flexible start dates make programs accessible
- On-the-job training and apprenticeships work well.
- Partnering with tribal communities is important.
- Relationships matter as much as job postings.

Building Workforce Success Together

- When housing, access, trust, and training align, workforce success follows.
- Build systems that meet people where they are.
- Create pathways, not barriers, to work.



A person is sitting on a wooden structure, possibly a boat or a pier, looking out over a body of water at sunset. The sky is a warm orange color, and the water reflects the light. The person is wearing a dark jacket and has their back to the camera. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.

WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR

From Hope to Home



Maacagíraac (Hidatsa)

Miigwetch (Anishinaabe)

wetAxkoosšteéRAat (Arikara)

Wááshiraharanito'sh (Mandan)

Pidamaye/Pilamaye (Dakota/Lakota)

Thank You!

indianaffairs.nd.gov

ndiac@nd.gov

701.328.1552

