

Introduced by

Senators Mathern, Davison, Hogue

Representatives Dakane, Lefor, Nathe

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new chapter to title 6 of the North Dakota Century Code,
2 relating to the creation of an office of immigration and the immigration workforce loan program;
3 to provide a transfer; to provide an appropriation; and to provide for a report.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1.** A new chapter to title 6 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and
6 enacted as follows:

7 **Office of immigration - Duties - Fees.**

8 There is created an office of immigration within the Bank of North Dakota. The office of
9 immigration reports to the immigration workforce advisory board, administers the immigration
10 workforce loan program, and promotes immigration to encourage resettlement of refugees and
11 immigrants in the state. The office of immigration shall:

- 12 1. Collaborate with private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to market and
13 promote North Dakota as a destination for immigrant and refugee families in an effort
14 to address workforce challenges and needs in the state.
- 15 2. Advise North Dakota businesses on immigration policy and assist with recruitment of
16 immigrant workers.
- 17 3. Provide legal assistance to immigrant families regarding federal and state immigration
18 requirements.
- 19 4. Develop guidelines and procedures for a fee system to be assessed to each business
20 benefiting from employment of immigrant workers as a result of the immigration
21 workforce loan program to offset administrative costs of the office of immigration. The
22 office of immigration shall begin assessment of immigration placement fees on July 1,
23 2025. Revenue collected from immigration placement fees and any interest earned on

1 these moneys must be deposited in a Bank of North Dakota operating fund for the
2 benefit of the office of immigration, subject to legislative appropriation.

3 **Immigration workforce advisory board - Membership - Meetings.**

4 1. The immigration workforce advisory board consists of:

5 a. The president of the Bank of North Dakota or the president's designee who shall
6 serve as the chairperson of the board;

7 b. The commissioner of the department of commerce or the commissioner's
8 designee;

9 c. The executive director of the department of health and human services or the
10 executive director's designee;

11 d. The state health officer or the state health officer's designee; and

12 e. The commissioner of the department of labor and human rights;

13 f. An individual from a North Dakota labor union appointed by the governor to serve
14 a two-year term beginning July 1 of each odd-numbered year;

15 g. An individual from a North Dakota organization that promotes North Dakota
16 businesses and is dedicated to improving the state's workforce appointed by the
17 governor to serve a two-year term beginning July 1 of each odd-numbered year;
18 and

19 h. An individual from a private nonprofit organization appointed by the governor to
20 serve a two-year term beginning July 1 of each odd-numbered year.

21 2. The board shall meet as necessary to review loan applications, approve the issuance
22 of loans, and review and approve the activities of the office of immigration.

23 **Immigration workforce loan program - Eligibility.**

24 1. The office of immigration shall administer the immigration workforce loan program and,
25 subject to approval from the immigration workforce advisory board, issue immigration
26 workforce loans to eligible individuals or families who have been residents of the state
27 for less than one year. As used in this chapter, "family" means a group of two or more
28 individuals related by birth, marriage, or adoption who reside together in North Dakota.
29 The office may not issue new loans after June 30, 2029.

30 2. An eligible individual or family may receive a loan of up to one hundred sixty thousand
31 dollars for a term not to exceed ten years. The principal balance of the loan must be

- 1 forgiven by ten percent each year if the individual or each adult in the family, during
2 the year being considered for loan forgiveness, has:
- 3 a. Been gainfully employed in North Dakota;
4 b. Established a business and is actively operating the business in North Dakota; or
5 c. Completed two semesters of postsecondary education as a full-time student at a
6 North Dakota institution.
- 7 3. An individual or family shall make monthly interest payments on the outstanding loan
8 balance based on the following interest rate schedule:
- 9 a. Zero percent for the first three years of the loan;
10 b. Two percent for the next two years of the loan; and
11 c. Equal to a standard Bank of North Dakota loan rate for all subsequent years.
- 12 4. The office of immigration shall establish the application process and additional
13 eligibility requirements for the immigration workforce loan program, subject to approval
14 from the immigration workforce advisory board.

15 **Immigration workforce loan fund.**

16 The immigration workforce loan fund is a special fund in the state treasury and must be
17 administered by the Bank of North Dakota. Moneys in the fund are available for providing
18 immigration workforce loans and defraying administrative expenses of the immigration
19 workforce loan program, subject to legislative appropriations. Interest earned on moneys in the
20 fund must be credited to the fund.

21 **SECTION 2. TRANSFER - LEGACY EARNINGS FUND TO IMMIGRATION WORKFORCE**
22 **LOAN FUND.** The office of management and budget shall transfer \$10,000,000 from the legacy
23 earnings fund to the immigration workforce loan fund during the biennium beginning July 1,
24 2023, and ending June 30, 2025.

25 **SECTION 3. APPROPRIATION - BANK OF NORTH DAKOTA - IMMIGRATION**
26 **WORKFORCE LOAN PROGRAM - FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITION - REPORT TO**
27 **SIXTY-NINTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY - ONE-TIME FUNDING.** There is appropriated out of
28 any moneys in the immigration workforce loan fund in the state treasury, not otherwise
29 appropriated, the sum of \$10,000,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the Bank
30 of North Dakota, of which \$8,800,000 is for the purpose of issuing immigration workforce loans
31 and \$1,200,000 is for the purpose of defraying administrative expenses of the immigration

Sixty-eighth
Legislative Assembly

- 1 workforce loan program for the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2025.
- 2 The Bank of North Dakota is authorized one full-time equivalent position to administer the
- 3 program. The Bank of North Dakota shall report to the sixty-ninth legislative assembly regarding
- 4 the number and amount of immigration workforce loans issued during the 2023-25 biennium.