

North Dakota Department of Transportation

DBE NEWSLETTER

– February 13, 2026 –

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Upcoming Bid Letting Meeting Pg. 1
- Announcements Pg. 2
- Scaling your Business Pg. 3
- Upcoming Events/Training Pg. 5
- Did You Know Pg. 6
- Giving Back Pg. 6
- ND Transportation Conference Pg. 9

NORTH
Dakota | Transportation
Be Legendary.



Contacts

Civil Rights Division
Ramona Bernard
Director
701-328-2576
rbernard@nd.gov

Amy Conklin
DBE Program Manager
701-328-3116
aconklin@nd.gov

Jessica Stadick-Feist
DBE Program Administrator
701-328-1898
jstadick@nd.gov

DBE Supportive
Services Consultant
Project Solutions, Inc.
701-214-5775
dbe@projectsolutionsinc.com

Advertisements

Advertisements are not required. The Bid Opening Sign-In System and Advertisement System have been disabled until further notice.

The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) will consider every request for reasonable accommodation to provide:

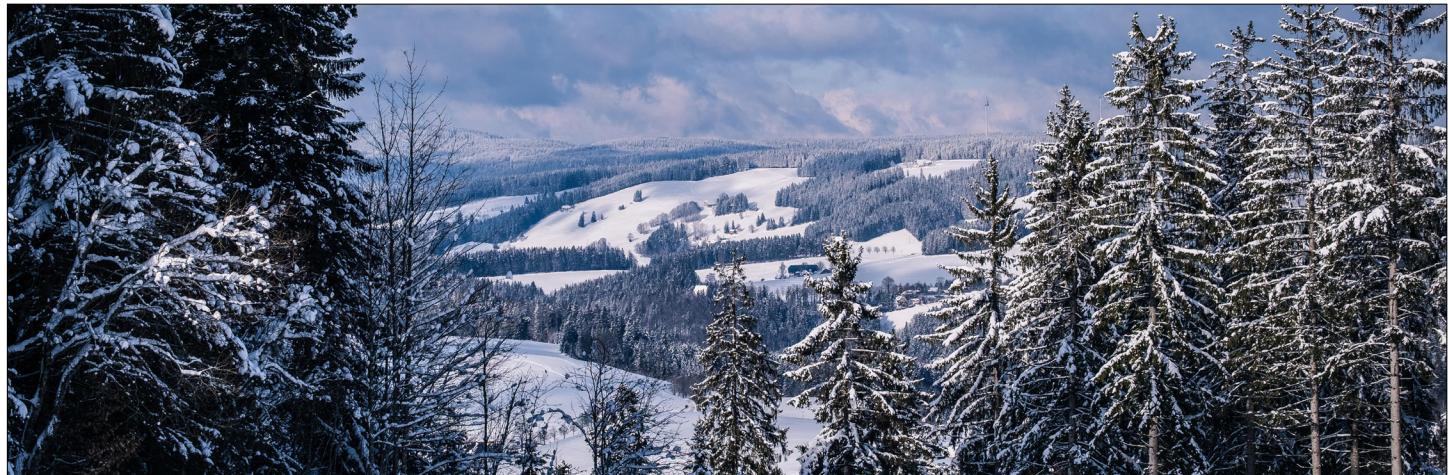
- An accessible meeting facility or other accommodation for people with disabilities.
- Language interpretation for people with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- Translations of written material necessary to access NDDOT programs and information.

To request accommodations, contact Heather Christianson, Civil Rights Division, NDDOT at 701-328-2978 or civilrights@nd.gov TTY users may use Relay North Dakota at 711 or 1-800-366-6888.

Upcoming Bid Letting Meeting

[Click Here](#) to access the NDDOT website where you will find the link to join the next meeting.

[Click Here](#) to view the slides from the February 6 DBE Industry Update Meeting.



Announcements...

Personal Narrative Workshop Materials Available

The recording, PowerPoint slides, and workbook from the Personal Narrative Workshop are now posted on the NDDOT DBE website: [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise \(DBE\) Program | NDDOT](#) under **Interim Final Rule (IFR) – Information**.

If you were unable to attend the live session, NDDOT recommends reviewing the recording before scheduling a 1-on-1 consultation with our DBE Supportive Services Consultant, Project Solutions, Inc. If, after watching the recording, you decide not to proceed with the reevaluation process for DBE eligibility, please submit a written withdrawal to civilrights@nd.gov.

Reevaluation Process – Target Date May 31, 2026

NDDOT has identified May 31, 2026 as the target date to move forward with completing the DBE certification reevaluation process. This will allow time to update program documents and establish a new triennial goal.

You can find the [NDDOT IFR FAQ](#) document on the NDDOT DBE website: [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise \(DBE\) Program | NDDOT](#) under Interim Final Rule (IFR) – Information.

Firms are encouraged to submit their Personal Narrative (PN) and Personal Net Worth (PNW) statements as soon as practicable to ensure timely reevaluation. North Dakota-based firms certified prior to October 1, 2025 that have not submitted reevaluation documents or requested withdrawal by May 31, 2026 will remain ineligible for DBE participation until those actions are completed. Once ready, please upload your documents to the open Q&A section of your Certification Record in the Certification and Compliance System. If you choose not to proceed with reevaluation, please submit a written withdrawal to civilrights@nd.gov.

You can review the IFR and IFR FAQ here: [October 2025 Interim Final Rule | US Department of Transportation](#).

How to Access the Q&As in the Certification and Compliance System:

- To complete the Q&A from the email link, here are some steps you can follow:
 1. Login
 2. On the left menu, click 'View' >> My Certifications
 3. Click the 'Respond' Link to the right of your application (the bottom of the Applications section of Cert List)
 4. Click on the Q&A tab (located at the top of the screen), then the 'Answer' link
 5. Enter an answer in the "Answer" text box
 6. Click on the 'Attach File' button
 7. Click Browse >> double click on your document >> click Attach File button >> and Close Window
 8. Select a document format
 9. Click on Next/Review and Submit
- To access the Q&A if you don't have the link from the email (from the Dashboard):
 1. Go to My Certifications
 2. Scroll down to Applications
 3. Find the latest ND Application and click View
 4. At the top of that page should be tabs one of which is Q&A
 5. Click the Q&A tab to see the latest Q&As from NDDOT

SCALING YOUR BUSINESS: STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



Scaling a business is more than just increasing revenue or expanding operations - it's about building a resilient foundation for long-term success. Whether you're a startup ready to take the next leap or an established company seeking to broaden your impact, sustainable growth requires strategic planning, adaptability, and a deep understanding of your market and resources. In this article, we will discuss proven strategies that not only drive expansion but also ensure that your business remains agile, efficient, and aligned with its core values so that you can expand with purpose and confidence.

Advantages and Concerns of Scaling Your Business

Scaling your business allows you to expand your revenue more quickly than you expand your costs of operations, which can bring some powerful advantages to your business. If done correctly, expanding your revenue can increase the relevance of your brand as you impact more markets and interact with more customers, deepen your relationships with existing customers, diversify your revenue streams, improve operational efficiencies if you can operate at scale, and increase your financial stability. However, that does not mean that scaling your business as rapidly as possible is always the best choice. Scaling will test your supply lines and business operations, add complexity to your work, can reduce the quality of your service with individual customers and erode trust, and overwhelm your personnel if you don't take the time to prepare before beginning to expand. If you want to scale successfully and sustainably, you should first create a plan.

Develop Clear Goals

Before you begin scaling, it's essential to have a clear set of goals for the direction in which you want your business to head. This involves defining success for your business in both the short and the long term and setting measurable goals by which to track your progress towards those goals. Ask yourself where your business needs to

be a year from now, in five years, or in a decade for you to feel successful. Once you have that vision, determine what metrics can be used to track your progress, such as revenue, employee numbers, numbers of clients, or whatever other measurable metrics suit your goals. Then, ask whether your current operations align with those goals. If they don't, that may be a good sign to focus on improving your operations at their current size before working towards growth. If they do, develop a roadmap to meet your long-term goals while continuing to adhere to your company's vision.

Build a Scalable Team

The team you begin to scale with will have a dramatic impact on the result of that growth. As your business expands, you will naturally need to rely more on the team you build while your company is small, so make sure those early hires have strong work ethics, share your vision, and have skills that will continue to be valuable as you scale, your team grows, and they transition into managerial roles. Once you have reached the point where you can no longer manage the minutiae of your business, remember that you hired your team with that in mind and empower them to make decisions on your behalf. As your business expands, it can be tempting to start hiring quickly and recruit anyone who seems like they can do the work but focusing on maintaining a smaller team of exceptional staff and adding new, high-quality recruits only where necessary generally leads to more sustainable growth.



Strengthen Your Core Operations

For many companies, expansion comes with the realization that they have been relying on operations that were good enough to be usable on a small scale but create bottlenecks as that scale increases. If your company realizes after these processes become problems, you will need to devote resources to restructuring your processes and retraining your team. Instead, you should plan ahead by developing scalable processes that you can train your team on now without needing to disrupt workflows when the problems become too large for them to manage. Incorporating technology and automation into your standard processes can be a great way to strengthen your operations from the start as well. Consider moving your file storage to digital formats, investing in cloud-based platforms for your business, and utilizing AI to handle simple customer requests. These changes might only save a few minutes when your business is young, but it can save days of work once you've reached the scale you desire.

Monitor Your Financial Health

Scaling your business will require a certain degree of investment before you begin seeing returns. As you begin the process of growth, make sure you maintain awareness of your financial situation so that your growth doesn't overwhelm your cash flow. Forecast your expenses and revenue accurately as the numbers grow so that you ensure that you maintain profitability. Focusing on maintaining efficiency rather than expanding your team and your systems as fast as possible can help with this, but it won't matter how much profit you are setting your company up to make in the future if you can't pay your staff while you grow. If you foresee shortfalls, work ahead to secure loans or investments to maintain liquidity.



Stay Adaptable

Even if your business plan extends 10 years into the future, you can't really know what will happen in that time. Adhering too rigidly to a plan can cause serious damage to your growth, especially if market changes make the original plan irrelevant. As your company grows, ensure that you are maintaining awareness of your changing market situation and reviewing your business plan regularly for feasibility. If you realize your forecasts no longer feel reasonable or decide that market shifts have altered your goals, spend the time to create a new plan rather than letting commitment to the plan you've already made slow your progress. If you trained your team and achieved buy in early, keep them in mind during these reviews. They may have noticed changes you didn't or be able to contribute ideas you haven't thought of.

Upcoming Events/Training

Business Development Essentials

Webinar

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 | 11:30 A.M. CT | Cost: Free

[Learn More >](#)

The 'How To' of Projecting Business Sales and Volume

Webinar

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 | 11:00 A.M. CT | Cost: \$10

[Learn More >](#)

Feb.
26

Fixed Ladders, Changing Rules: Navigating OSHA's Ladder Fall Protection Requirements

Webinar

Thursday, February 26, 2026 | 1:00 P.M. CT | Cost: Free

[Learn More >](#)

Mar.
10

Referral Networking and LinkedIn for Small Business Owners

Webinar

Tuesday, March 10, 2026 | 3:30 P.M. CT | Cost: Free

[Learn More >](#)

Did You Know...

Personal Narrative Assistance Available for ND DBEs

Project Solutions Inc. is the Supportive Services provider for NDDOT and is available for one-on-one assistance to ND DBEs who would like help drafting their personal narrative for the recertification process.

If you were unable to attend one of the live Personal Narrative workshops, we encourage you to review the recorded session before scheduling a one-on-one meeting with PSI. The recording can be found on the NDDOT DBE website: [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise \(DBE\) Program | NDDOT](#) under **Interim Final Rule (IFR) – Information**.

To schedule time with a consultant, email dbe@projectsolutionsinc.com.

DBE Training Reimbursement Program

- No DBE Training Reimbursement Program for FY26

Giving Back: How to Support Your Local Community

Small businesses are much more reliant on local communities than their larger counterparts. Their neighbors make up more of their customers, more of their funding comes from local sources, and their employees are more often hired close to home, so when a small business succeeds, it can be a great opportunity to give back to the community that supported its journey. Luckily, the connection between business and their neighbors goes both ways, and small businesses have a unique capacity to create meaningful impacts that matter to the people who helped them succeed. By actively engaging with their community, small business owners can cultivate loyalty and enhance their brand reputation while driving positive change and improving their neighborhoods. In this article, we will look at a few ideas that can give you a chance to ensure that your successes benefit the community that made them possible.



Supporting Your Community Supports You

It is important to recognize that giving back is not something that you do to support your community at the expense of your company. Rather, it benefits your business to do so. Being a positive force in your neighborhood can improve the lifestyles of the people in it, which gives you access to customers with more money and employees with more talent and higher productivity. It also gives you a chance to put your company's name on events that its stakeholders view positively, which increases brand awareness and improves customer loyalty. The benefits of giving back to your community can be immediately seen through people seeing your logo tied to a cause they support and becoming a customer, or they can be impossible to measure and only become apparent in the long term as your environment improves and your profitability improves with it, but they do exist. As we look at some ways to give back, it may be tempting to see that they cost money or time and discount them to protect your bottom line – and you absolutely should not feel pressured to do more than your business can handle – but remember that giving back to your community improves your business's prospects, so think of these suggestions not as sacrifices, but as investments in your own future as well as the futures of those around you.

Support Local Events and Organizations

Perhaps the most famous way for businesses to give back to their communities is by putting their weight behind organizations and events that matter to them. If you are looking for a way to start giving back and your business has the time and funds to do so, try looking for organizations you support around your business and get in touch to find out how you can help. Common organizations for this kind of support are nonprofits that operate in your area, schools, or community led events that support causes that align with your company's values. Many groups will be willing to give your company marketing in return for this support by listing you as a sponsor, including your branding in their material, or shouting you out at the event. This kind of support is a great way to put your money to work for the people around you while increasing awareness of your brand.



If, as you look at ways in which you want to help your community, you find that there is a lack of existing organizations supporting the causes you want to advance, you can also host events on your own. Staging your own events gives you more direct control over the ways in which your time and money helps your community, and this can create more significant changes over time. There may be other people around you who want to be helping but don't know how, so creating momentum by offering those people a chance to gather, show their support, and learn what they can do to help may snowball into the creation of more specifically devoted groups who can carry the torch for you.

Volunteer

A great way to show that your company is involved in its community using time instead of money is volunteering. As a business owner, volunteering personally can be extremely effective as it makes you feel more personal to the people around you and gives you a chance to develop connections, but including your business can increase your impact. You can get your employees involved by informing them of events and encouraging them to sign up to go together, or by creating events your company can do on its own to support its community. The effectiveness of these strategies will likely be dramatically improved if time spent at company-sanctioned charity events is considered work time that is eligible for pay or other rewards.

Outside of group events, you can encourage further volunteering outside of work by offering rewards for time spent volunteering with organizations that the company supports. These rewards can be monetary, like offering extra vacation time, or nonmonetary, like giving employees who do significant community work a shout out in company newsletters.

Donate

On the other hand, an effective way to support your community with money instead of time is through donations. Businesses usually have more funds to distribute than individuals, so giving money to causes you support on its own can be very helpful, but if you involve your employees or your community in your giving you can expand your ability to help and the opportunities to be recognized for it. This can be as simple as including donation links to nonprofits your organization is giving to in social media posts you make to give viewers a convenient way to follow your example. More complex methods of involvement, however, can be even more effective. Offering to match donations made in support of a nonprofit your company sponsors gives you the chance to give that group more money than you could donate alone. Just like volunteering, offering rewards to employees who donate to causes your company supports can be a great way to encourage giving and build team morale.



2026 ND Transportation Conference

The North Dakota Department of Transportation, in partnership with Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, invites you to the 2026 North Dakota Transportation Conference. The conference is scheduled for March 10-11, 2026, at the Bismarck Event Center.

Registration is now open. [Click here for more information.](#)

ND TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE 2026



SAVE THE DATE!

March 10-11, 2026 • Bismarck Event Center

NORTH
Dakota | Transportation
Be Legendary.

NDSU UPPER GREAT PLAINS
TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE