

# North Dakota Desperate For Workers To Fill Empty Jobs

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## Some 25,000 jobs remain unfilled

The Associated Press Mar 18th 2014 12:20PM Updated Mar 18th 2014 5:27PM



APWorker hangs from an oil derrick in North Dakota.

**By James MacPherson**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) - [North Dakota](#) officials are sending a plea to people across the country: We need you.

The state's unprecedented oil bonanza has made it the economic darling of the nation - boasting a sturdy economy, a state government budget surplus, and its highest population ever, as swarms of people have migrated to North Dakota. But it hasn't been enough, officials say, citing some 25,000 more jobs than takers in all industries in the state.

Hoping to woo workers to [fill those jobs](#), Lt. Gov. Drew Wrigley and the North Dakota Economic Development Foundation on Monday unveiled a "Find the Good Life in North Dakota" campaign at the state Capitol in Bismarck.

> [Find a job in North Dakota](#)

"These are exciting times in our state," said Wrigley, who called the lack of an adequate workforce one of "the challenges of prosperity."

The \$800,000 campaign is being paid for equally by tax-supported state funds and a donation by [Hess Corp.](#), a New York based oil company. The campaign will rely on media advertising and a state website that is expected to be running in May. Specific details of the campaign have yet to be released.

Officials said in a statement that the campaign will focus on career opportunities in North Dakota and promoting the state as "a great place to live, work and raise a family." It will target states with "chronic unemployment" and will attempt to lure [skilled workers of various occupations](#), from [engineering](#) to [nursing](#). The effort also will target [military veterans](#), and those who will soon leave the armed services, officials said.

### Getty

**Images** Trucks are parked near new homes rented by oil workers in Williston, North Dakota.



North Dakota has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation, at less than 3 percent. It is leading the nation in population growth and the number of residents in the

state is at an all-time high, at more than 725,000 people, according to the Census Bureau.

The surge in economic activity and population growth has come largely from oil. The state has gone from the nation's ninth-biggest oil producer in 2006 to the second, behind only Texas.

> [Find a job in the oil industry](#)

North Dakota, which historically has conjured up images of a bleak, wind-swept and treeless wasteland, always has been a tough sell, in good times and bad. The perception was so great that one group a decade ago proposed changing the state's name by dropping "North" and leaving just "Dakota," to dispel the state's image of inhospitable winter weather.

The turnaround in the state's fortunes began about seven years ago, reversing a more than 70-year trend of migration out, when more people were going than coming.

As recently as 2007, when the state's oil bonanza was in its infancy and North Dakota had some 10,000 unfilled jobs, state officials funded several job fairs across the country attempting to entice people to the state - especially young families - in an effort to boost the population. The effort specifically targeted former North Dakotans, a move officials at the time said was an easier sell than to outsiders, who may have dismissed the state as frigid and foreboding

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