

Annual Report

2025



www.ndunited.org



About the North Dakota United Foundation

Each year the North Dakota United Foundation prepares an annual report to provide the Foundation's supporters with an overview of the year's activities. The purpose of the North Dakota United Foundation is to promote educational excellence and quality public service in North Dakota. The Foundation's goal is to aid educators, public servants, and students in achieving greater educational success.

The NDU Foundation accomplishes this by offering specifically designed and administered grants and scholarships to individual educators, public servants, and college students designed to enhance their skills.

In addition, the Foundation administers funds for NDU professional development, the Thomas & Garnett Wurst Endowment for the benefit of students at Midkota High School in Glenfield, the Robert & Janice Lorch Family Educational Endowment for the benefit of students at Hillsboro High School, the Minot Education Association's Fund for the Improvement of Education, the Oakes Education Scholarship Fund, and the Ted Meckle Memorial Scholarship for the benefit of students at Ray High School.



NDU Foundation Board of Directors

It is with pride that the Foundation's Board of Directors has established this special alliance with education and public service leaders who understand that their professional growth is the key to success.

Brenda Seehafer, Foundation President, Educator, Active member, Rolla
Nick Archuleta, NDU President, Mandan
Alicia Bata, NDU Vice President K-12, Cavalier
Kala Christensen, NEA Director, Grand Forks
Gary Feist, Foundation Treasurer, NDU Vice President Public Employees, Bismarck
Aaron Flynn, Higher Education, Active member, Grand Forks
Toni Gumeringer, NDU-Retired, Bismarck
Clarice Hackman, NDSU Library staff, Active member, Fargo
Derrick Hertz, CFO Railway Credit Union, General Public member, Mandan
Sheila Peterson, 2024 ND Teacher of the Year, Active member, Bismarck
Jason Rohrer, Horace Mann agent, General Public member, Minot
Kaitlin Walker, Educator, Active member, Bottineau

Special gratitude to outgoing NDU Foundation Board members for their dedication to public education and public service:

Karen Askerooth, Fargo
Bret Dockter, Harvey
Sarah Fox, Mandan
Josh Standing Elk, Bismarck
Lisa Wolf (past NDU Foundation President), Minot



Growth

The growth of the North Dakota United Foundation has been driven by the increase in the number and value of endowments. To comply with North Dakota law related to endowments, the Foundation may only use the earnings, including growth, for the annual awards. The total net assets at the end of the fiscal year were \$2,828,256 of that \$120,632 has no donor restrictions. This past year the Foundation received \$256,376 in contributions to the various endowments. This included an initial gift of \$200,000 to create the Betty Lu Lenthe Speech Education Endowment.

The Foundation will create an endowment with an initial gift of \$5,000 or more. The donor, working with the Foundation staff, determines the purpose of the Endowment and the requirements for any scholarships or grants made from the Endowment.

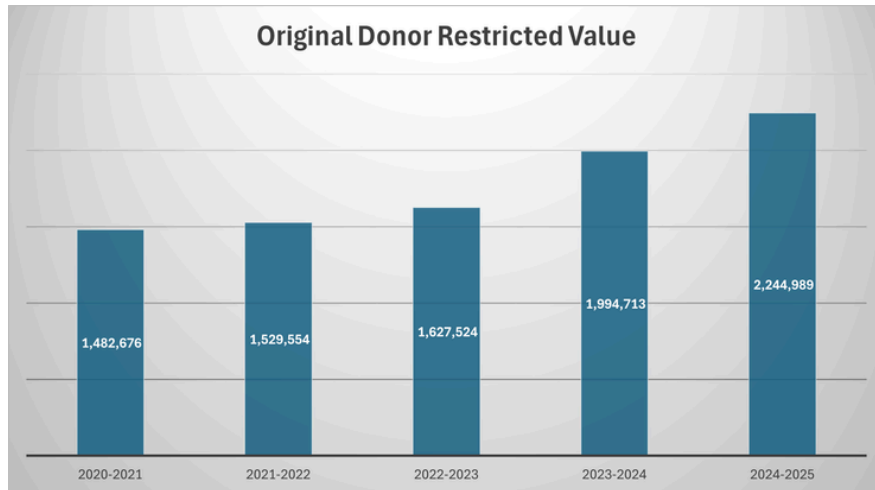
While the endowments are invested for the long term, the Foundation's investment policy requires at least three years of projected annual giving be maintained in fully insured certificate of deposits or money market or sweep account. This allows the Foundation to meet the annual giving goals and avoid the need to sell securities in the event of a market downturn.

Several times each year the Foundation staff meets with the designated investment managers from Halstenson Askew Wealth Advisors from Fargo to review the investment portfolio and establish the short and long-term cash needs.

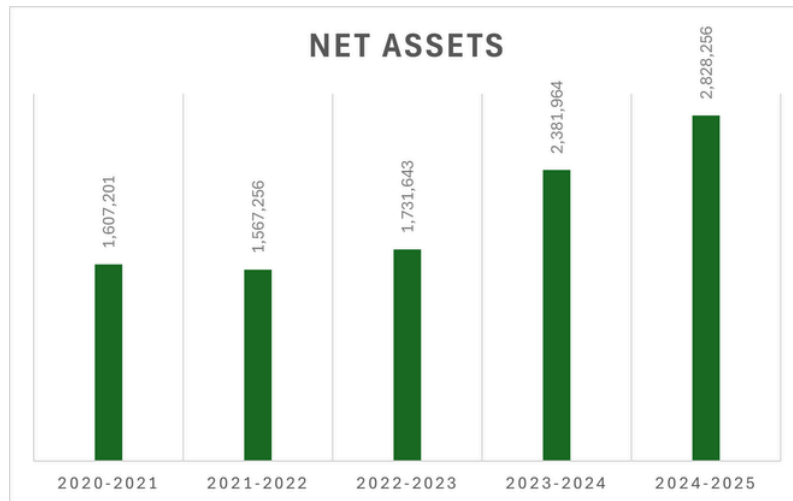
The goal of the Foundation's investment policy is to return 5% annually in interest, dividends, and realized growth in most years.

Growth, continued

The Original Donor Restricted Value chart displays the value of endowments at the time the endowment was created as well as any additional donations from the original founder and other supporters. This includes donations made during Giving Hearts Day.

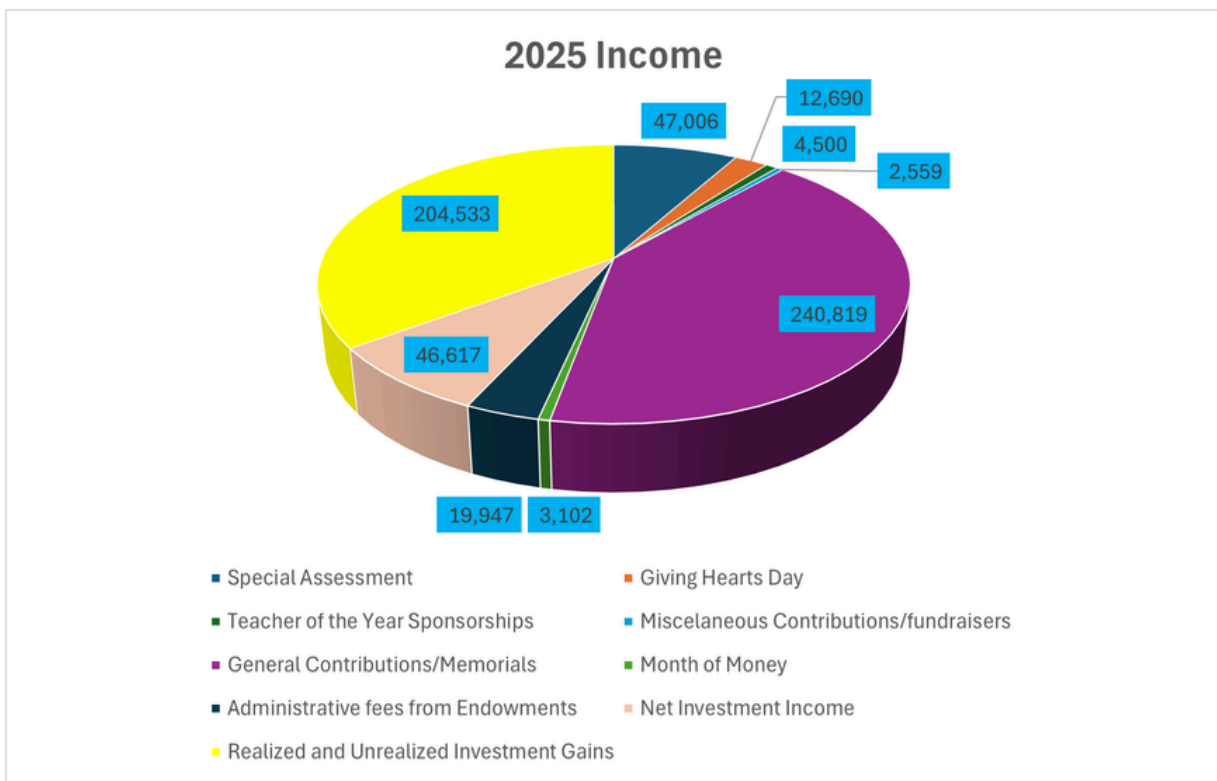


The Net Assets chart is the overall value of the funds managed by the NDU Foundation, less any outstanding scholarships, grants, and expenses. Investments are reported at their fair market value on August 31, 2025. Invested funds are managed under the guidance of Halstenson Askew Wealth Advisors, Fargo. The investments include both equities and fixed income securities. The goal of the investment portfolio is to earn a 5% return in most years, while providing additional internal growth.



Growth, continued

As the North Dakota United Foundation grows both the net investment income and the gains in the investment portfolio become more significant. In 2025, 43% of the Foundation’s income came from investments.





Support

The Foundation receives its support from North Dakota United members and friends of public education and public service. Additional support comes from investment earnings, the special assessment that each member pays, the annual Month of Money Raffle in December, the impactful Giving Hearts Day each February, a silent auction at the NDU Delegate Assembly, the sale of NDU Foundation Champion pins, major gifts to establish endowments, as well as memorials and other gifts from members and supporters of public service and public education. Below is a brief summary of each of these activities.



SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

The NDU Delegate Assembly established a special assessment of \$6 on full-time teacher members and proportionate amounts on other membership categories. For 2025, the assessment totaled \$47,006 with half directly funding Professional Development activities.

MONTH OF MONEY



The NDU Foundation conducted a cash raffle in December 2024 with a net profit of \$3,102. Four hundred tickets were sold with half of the income returned as cash prizes. The earnings from Month of Money was used to create an endowment for the NDU Member/Dependent Scholarship, available for any field of study.

NDU FOUNDATION CHAMPION PINS



North Dakota United members attending the annual NDU Delegate Assembly and Summer Leadership & Advocacy Summit had the opportunity to purchase an inaugural NDU Foundation Champion pin. Each year, a limited number of pins will be available. The \$688 received from the sale of the pins was dedicated to the Foundation's professional development fund.

Support, continued



GIVING HEARTS DAY

Giving Hearts Day is a regional online giving event which raises funds for charities in North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota every year in February. Ninety-six individuals, many of whom were non-members and businesses, contributed \$5,920 which was matched for a total revenue of \$11,840. Participants were able to designate their donation to a specific endowment. The following shows the donation to each fund, without the match. If no endowment was selected, the gifts were credited to the NDU Memorial Endowment.

- NDU Memorial Endowment - \$2,845
- Cindy & Gary Rath Education Scholarship - \$950
- Bill Oban Special Education Scholarship - \$775
- Howard Loftesnes Memorial Education Scholarship - \$475
- NDU Professional Development - \$425
- Halstenson Family Music Scholarship - \$200
- Fern Pokorny Education Scholarship - \$175
- Mary Cripps Special Education Scholarship - \$25
- Les Snavelly Memorial Education Scholarship - \$25
- Joseph A. Westby Leadership Award - \$25

SILENT AUCTION AT DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

The silent auction held in conjunction with the NDU Delegate Assembly in April raised \$615. Several pieces of art were donated by Linda Maize and Marie Snavelly, both longtime supporters of the NDU Foundation.

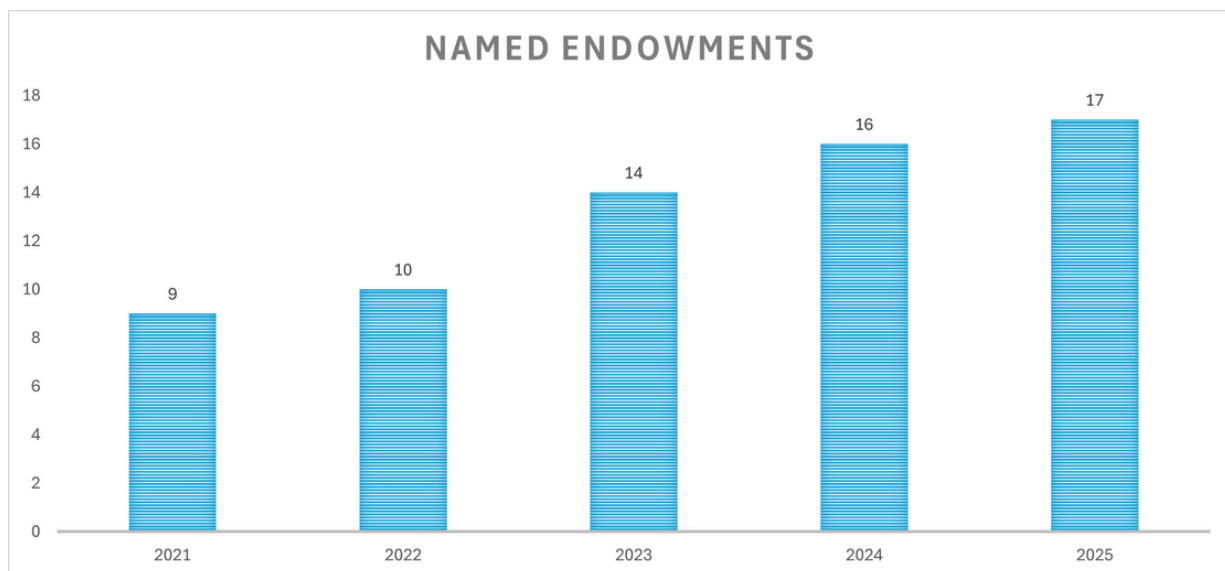




Scholarships & Grants

The North Dakota United Foundation currently offers scholarships and grants specifically designed for individual educators, public servants, and college students to enhance their skills. Scholarships are available to North Dakota United members, including Student NDU and NDU-Retired members, as well as the dependents of all members. Eighteen scholarships and grants were available in 2025. Several of the endowments support more than one scholarship.

Scholarships and grants are funded by a combination of investment earnings and special assessments. The first endowment with an initial value of \$5,000 was created to honor Bill Oban. The second endowment, honoring Ron and Ann Anstrom, was created in 1999 with an initial donation of \$50,000. In 2009, the third endowment was created to support the Joseph A. Westby Leadership Award. As of the end of the 2025 fiscal year in August, the total number of named endowments was seventeen. The original donor-restricted gift amounts of all endowments managed by the NDU Foundation was \$2,244,989.



Scholarships & Grants, cont.



In May 2025, the NDU Foundation announced that 59 NDU members and dependents, across twenty-five counties in North Dakota, had been selected to receive approximately \$75,000 in scholarships and grants.

Ron & Ann Anstrom Scholarship – The purpose is to assist individual English, math or science instructors to improve their qualifications by attending summer school or pursuing graduate level courses during the regular academic year, online courses or extension courses that are part of a graduate program. \$9,000 was awarded in 2025 to: Myah Fitzsimonds, Walhalla; Heidi Livingston, Lamoure; Brian Walz, Minot; Sarah Williamson, Fargo, and; the UND Pages & Pathways Conference.

Mary Cripps Special Education Scholarship – Available to either an undergraduate or graduate student pursuing initial or advanced training in special education. \$750 was awarded in 2025 to: Taylor Peterson, Bismarck and Allisyn Tollefson, Cavalier.

Halstenson Family Music Scholarship Fund – Available to a NDU member who possesses a current license to teach music in a North Dakota public school and is pursuing a graduate degree in music. While the individual is pursuing a graduate degree, the award may be used to participate in credit or noncredit educational opportunities to improve his/her K-12 music content knowledge and teaching skills. These opportunities are not required to be part of the master's degree course content, but an experience that would certainly enhance the teacher's skills, knowledge, and abilities. Individuals must have at least one year of full-time teaching experience and indicate a desire to continue teaching music in North Dakota to be considered for this scholarship. \$1,500 was awarded in 2025 to Gabrielle Helfrich, West Fargo.



Scholarships & Grants, cont.

Holland Family Experiential Learning Grant - Available to assist members engaged in developing and/or presenting experiential learning to improve public service or public education in North Dakota, with a preference given to experiential learning involving North Dakota studies. \$750 was awarded in 2025 to: Tara Okerson, Rolla and Jessica Van Winkle, Bismarck.

Horace Mann ND Agents Graduate Education Scholarship – This program has been established to assist individual NDU members improve their qualifications by attending summer school or engaging in graduate level course during the regular academic year, online courses or extension courses that are part of a graduate program. \$2,500 was awarded in 2025 to: Krista Amann, Rogers; Gratia Brown, Valley City; Sarah Crossingham, Dickinson, and; Saige Forseth, West Fargo.

Betty Lu Lenthe Speech Education Grant – Available to assist an individual member or group of members or their students in speech, debate and drama activities. The award is open to individual members, students, student organizations, or educational institutions. This grant was first awarded in 2025 with \$2,000 to Krista Hulderman, West Fargo.

Howard Loftesnes Memorial Education Scholarship - Awarded to a student pursuing an undergraduate or graduate education as a reading literacy specialist or a similar field of study. Preference shall be given to applicants who attended or are employed at Simle Middle School in Bismarck. \$1,000 was awarded in 2025 to Brenda Seehafer, Rolla.

North Dakota United Education Scholarship – Available to a student who is pursuing an undergraduate degree in education. \$6,000 was awarded in 2025 to: Karady Evans, New England; Tiara Flying Horse, Bismarck; Alliana Freund, Cando; Sabrina Haas, Napoleon; Andrea Hoyme, Kindred; Brinklyn Johnson, Valley City; Mackenzie Motter, Clifford; Ryan Strande, Thompson, and; Brayden Sutherland, Enderlin.



Scholarships & Grants, cont.

North Dakota United Foundation Ethnic Minority Scholarship – Awarded to a minority in any post-secondary trade, vocational, or undergraduate degree program. The Foundation will give special consideration to a student attending a tribal college. \$3,000 was awarded in 2025 to: Axumite Wren James, Fargo; Lydia LaFromboise, Bottineau; Madison Samuelson, Sarles; Avery St. Germaine, Rolla, and; Scout Woods, Wahpeton.

North Dakota United Member/Dependent Scholarship – Available to an active NDU member or dependent of an active member who is pursuing post-secondary education in any field of study including vocational, associate or bachelor degree program. \$6,000 was awarded in 2025 to: Emily Curren, Bismarck; Gracie Doe, Killdeer; McKayla Donat, Bismarck; McKenna Ernst, Dickinson; Alison Heyen, Colfax; Signe Nagle, Fargo; Madeline Stangl, Emerado, and; Ryan Strande, Thompson.

NDU Workplace Innovation Grant – Available for an individual member or a group of members to implement service delivery innovation to improve public education or public service in North Dakota. \$500 was awarded in 2025 to: Erin Bohnenstingl, Lidgerwood and Nicole Lindgren, Minot.

Bill Oban Special Education Scholarship – Available to an outstanding undergraduate or graduate student who is preparing for a career in special education. \$1,500 was awarded in 2025 to Kaydee Stewart, Bowman.

Dr. Joanne Pearson Fine Arts Grant – Available for an individual member or a group of members to enhance arts at the elementary or secondary level, support professional development, and/or support student activities in the arts including, but not limited to: painting, sculpture, literature, architecture, cinema, music, and theater. \$1,000 was awarded in 2025 to: Brittany Gores, Fargo and Erik Stordalen, Bismarck.



Scholarships & Grants, cont.

Fern Pokorny Education Scholarship – Available to a student pursuing an undergraduate degree in elementary education from Dickinson State University. The student must be a graduate of a North Dakota high school. \$500 was awarded in 2025 to Hannah Meschke, Dickinson.

Cindy & Gary Rath Education Scholarship – Available to an NDU student member or a North Dakota resident who is a student NEA/AFT member in another state, pursuing an undergraduate degree in education. A preference will be given to a student attending Dickinson State University or Valley City State University. \$1,000 was awarded in 2025 to: Alliana Freund, Cando.

Les Snavelly Memorial Education Scholarship – Available to a student at Dickinson State University who has been accepted to the teacher education program at DSU and is pursuing a degree from DSU that qualifies the student to become a certified teacher. \$500 was awarded in 2025 to Brynn Hyttinen, Washburn.

Harris & Arlyce Widmer Business Education Grant – Available for an individual member or group of members to support student-oriented activities such as the Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda, Junior Achievement, and/or Young Investment Clubs, etc. This grant was first awarded in 2025 with \$1,000 to: Braelyn Scott, Grand Forks and Easton Tibbs, Crosby.

Harris & Arlyce Widmer Family Business Education Scholarship – Available to an active ND United member or dependent of an active member who is pursuing undergraduate or graduate education, or professional development opportunities in business education. This scholarship was first awarded in 2025 with \$2,500 to: Emery Holland, Casselton; Brinklyn Johnson, Valley City, and; Zack Volson, Balfour.

Joseph A. Westby Leadership Award – Given each year in recognition of Joe Westby's 45 years of leadership in education, including 32 years within our union. Westby recognized the need to encourage members and staff to pursue leadership training. \$1,000 was awarded in 2025 to Emily Wicktor, Valley City.

New Grants

Lenthe



Betty Lu Lenthe Speech Education Grant - Available to assist an individual member or group of members or their students in speech, debate and drama activities. The award is open to individual members, students, student organizations, or educational institutions. The first Lenthe grant was awarded in 2025 with \$2,000 to Krista Hulderman, West Fargo.

Widmer



Harris & Arlyce Widmer Business Education Grant - Available for an individual member or group of members to support student-oriented activities such as the Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lamda, Junior Achievement, and/or Young Investment Clubs, etc. The first Widmer grants were awarded in 2025 for a total of \$1,000 to: Braelynn Scott, Grand Forks and Easton Tibbs, Crosby.

Local Scholarships



The North Dakota United Foundation, as a 501(c)(3) public charity, is able to accept and administer funds which meet the public purpose of the NDU Foundation to “enhance public service and public education in North Dakota through a program of scholarships and grants.” Any NDU local or individual who would like to learn more about how the NDU Foundation can assist you with establishing an annual scholarship or endowment should contact the NDU Foundation.

Robert & Janice Lorch Family Educational Endowment - Wanda and John Worrel, in honor of Robert and Janice Lorch, established an endowment to provide scholarships to Hillsboro High School seniors continuing their education at the University of North Dakota, Mayville State University, or the North Dakota State College of Science. In 2025, two students each received a \$1,500 scholarship: Myla Kaldor and Gracie Miller.

Ted Meckle Memorial Scholarship - The NDU Foundation is assisting the Ray Education Association in administering an annual scholarship program for seniors at Ray High School. In 2025, three students each received a \$200 scholarship: Shaylee Kunze, Gretchen Hickel, and MaKenna Landsverk.

Oakes Education Association Scholarship - The NDU Foundation is assisting the Oakes Education Association in administering an annual scholarship program for students at Oakes High School. In 2025, two students each received a \$500 scholarship: Megan Miller and Rhett Miller.

Thomas & Garnet Wurst Scholarship - Established through the estate of Thomas Wurst, the earnings from the principal of the fund are used to award scholarships to graduating seniors from Midkota High School. In 2025, six students were selected by a faculty committee to each receive an \$5,000 scholarship: Savanna Dreher, Mason Iverson, Kylie Johnson, Madisyn Reese, Will Spickler, and Vanessa Vollmer.

North Dakota State Teachers of the Year

The North Dakota United Foundation proudly partnered with the North Dakota State Teachers of the Year (NDSTOY) Chapter to offer a Day of Professional Learning for former Teachers of the Year and finalists on April 7th at the Heritage Center in Bismarck. The day provided Teachers of the Year with an opportunity to network, share best practices, and participate in the ND legislative session. The NDSTOY spent time at the ND Legislature sitting in on the Senate Education Committee, participating in a Governor's office bill signing ceremony, and observing the passage of the school cell phone bill on the Senate floor. At the Heritage Center, seven of the state's best educators presented information on topics ranging from service learning, to music in the classroom, to high impact teaching. The participants ended the day with plans to return to their schools and share all they had gained with their colleagues.

On September 26th, the NDU Foundation hosted a Celebratory Luncheon at the ND Governor's Residence for the 2026 ND Teacher of the Year finalists, their friends and families, former Teachers of the Year, Governor & First Lady Armstrong, and partnering organizations. The luncheon was held before the Teacher of the Year announcement ceremony at the state Capitol. The Teacher of the Year events are made possible by generous donations from businesses across North Dakota.

The NDU Foundation would like to thank the following event sponsors: Bobcat, Brady Martz, Essentia Health, Missouri Slope Central Labor Council, Bravera, Aspire Credit Union, Basic Electric, Horace Mann, Railway Credit Union, Advanced Business Methods, Electric Systems, Capital City Construction, NRG Technology Services, and Grant County State Bank.





NDU Professional Development



Promoting educational excellence through professional development has been a long-term goal of the NDU Foundation. With the dedication of fifty percent of the special assessment paid by NDU members to professional development, the Foundation was able to partner with the Professional Development team at NDU to provide quality coursework at no cost to NDU members again in 2025.

During 2025, there were 3,024 registrations in total for NDU professional development offerings including book studies, retired member book studies, negotiations training, aspiring educators training, ESP book studies, ESP events, in-person professional development offerings, educator ethics, local leadership events and trainings, independent study courses, special education sessions, international teacher sessions, legislative events, and Podcast PD. Of these registrations, 2,934 were NDU members and 90 were non-members. The savings to members thanks to the NDU Foundation was \$146,700.

In addition, 85 members participated in 10 early career educator cohort courses. A full cohort lasts approximately 14 months. Cohort participants must be in service years 1-7. These cohorts saved early career educators \$17,450.00 in 2025.

Members with questions on the professional development opportunities provided by the NDU Foundation and NDU should contact Amy Flicek at amy.flicek@ndunited.org or at 701-223-0450.

Giving Hearts Day Testimonials



Allison Bryn

NDU Member/Dependent Scholarship

This scholarship had a positive impact on my professional life, allowing me to pursue my double degree in Social Work and Psychology with less of a worry on financials, letting me focus more on my academics.



Lane Goehring

Fern Pokorny Education Scholarship, Cindy & Gary Rath Education Scholarship

Receiving this scholarship allowed me to spend considerably more time focusing on student teaching and being the best I could possibly be as I learned how to teach.



Jason Grueneich

Harris & Arlyce Widmer Family Business Education Scholarship

I'm so grateful for the NDU Foundation scholarship. It allowed me to finish my college degree and open up more opportunity in my life during middle age and I'll be forever thankful for that!



Steve Justice

Bill Oban Special Education Scholarship

This scholarship allowed me to focus solely on my teaching ability in special education. With this being a new position, I got to dive in without financial stress and give all to my students.



Samantha Olson

Joseph A. Westby Leadership Award

This award has been essential in pursuing a degree in educational leadership. Balancing family and professional life is challenging enough without financial pressure, this award has made my desire to continue my education a bit easier.



Sheila Peterson

NDU Workplace Innovation Grant

I am so grateful for the NDU grant that helped fund relationship building events for our Peer to Peer programs. We see the biggest growth in our mentors and mentees when they have the opportunity to just be kids together!



Caleb Roth

NDU Education Scholarship

With my scholarship, I can work toward becoming a passionate and experienced music educator without feeling overly stressed over paying my tuition.



Ryan Strande

NDU Education Scholarship

The scholarship I was awarded has helped me continue pursuing my educational goals while also limiting the financial burden that paying for college can be.



Nicole Wilebski

Mary Cripps Special Education Scholarship, Bill Oban Special Education Scholarship

These scholarships allowed me to pay for my exams to test out of classes, which allowed me to student teach a semester early. Without these scholarships, I would not have been able to teach in September this past fall.





2025 Donors

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Karen Askerooth
Brandon Askew
Amber Augustadt
Kevin Bailey
Alicia Bata
Jackie Blessum
Joshua Boschee
Kristi Broderick
Paul Brucker
Shelby Campbell
Mary Carlson
Jenn Clay
Tamara Darling
Larry Dietz
Finton Dooley
Brenda Eide
Mary Eldredge Sandbo
Gary Feist
Leland Fleischer
Amy Flicek
Aaron Flynn
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Contact Us



701.223.0450



foundation@ndunited.org



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Together we are planting the seeds for the future of public education and public service by providing opportunities for scholarships and grants.

DONATE TODAY!

