



## Brady Ash

Executive Director, Forward Devils Lake

**What is the ND Career Builders Program?** The ND Career Builders Scholarship & Loan Repayment program is a tool for businesses to recruit and retain talent in high-need occupations in ND. This unique partnership provides \$1 of state funds for each \$1 of matching funds, up to a total of \$17,000 per recipient! Individuals can receive a scholarship on the front end, loan repayment on the back-end, or both, for their commitment to the state to fill one of the high demand occupations.

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Let's chat with Brady about his experience with the program!

**Q. Please tell us your title and role at your organization.**

**A.** I am the Executive Director of Forward Devils Lake Corporation. Forward Devils Lake is the Economic Development center for the City of Devils Lake and Ramsey County. I assist with business expansion and retention, workforce development, and campaign for various housing and land development projects.

**Q. Tell us about your organization's involvement with the ND Career Builders program.**

**A.** Forward Devils Lake has utilized the Career Builders Scholarship program since it became a statewide tool. Prior to this, Forward Devils Lake had its own college scholarship / loan repayment program that businesses had access to. After Career Builders launched, these two programs essentially merged and have become one big benefit for our students.

**Q. What is the greatest benefit to your organization from being involved in the NDCB Scholarship & Loan Repayment programs?**

**A.** Being able to reach the height of our goals to retain our students by introducing them to local and area businesses in which they may be interested in working for. Whether it's becoming an electrician, plumber, dental hygienist, this program had made this all the more possible.

**Q. How has this program helped your workforce recruitment and retention effort?**

**A.** It has allowed us to be "competitive" in the workforce world. This opens the door for our students to see that they can work and live in the place they grew up in.

**Q. What would you tell other organizations who are considering investing in the program?**

**A.** I believe other organizations should invest in the program because, as the saying goes, these kids are our future. If we can't recruit our own to work and live in our community, we may lose great people and great businesses years down the road.

**Q. What would you tell students who are considering an in-demand career and committing to the State of ND?**

**A.** These types of programs don't pop up often – take advantage of not only the scholarships, but the internships/apprenticeships to gain valuable experience in the industry you're studying to enter.

**Q. Why should organizations/businesses invest in ND's workforce to keep talent in the state with programs like this?**

**A.** We all need to work together to align our students with a career not only that interests them, but that will be beneficial to themselves and our community. The Career Builders Program makes this happen, and I'm so happy Forward Devils Lake gets to be a part of this.