





The number of South Dakota students not pursuing higher education is rising. **Nearly 40% of students do not participate in postsecondary education**, directly contrasting with the number of educated persons needed to support workforce demand.

Despite state efforts to manage tuition and fees, increasing out-of-pocket expenses prevent many qualified students from pursuing a post-secondary degree. The financial burden is even greater for adult learners, first-generation students, part-time students and new Americans. Educational barriers prevent young people from realizing their true potential and hinder South Dakota’s ability to overcome workforce shortages.

**72%** OF JOBS IN THE US WILL REQUIRE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND/OR TRAINING BY 2031

Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce

Workforce demand in the health care, education and business industries is particularly high. USD is proactively working with employers to address workforce shortages in these areas, adding academic programs where necessary and ensuring existing programs align with industry needs. Our commitment to supporting South Dakota’s workforce pipeline is further illustrated by the University of South Dakota – Sioux Falls, a campus established in response to the workforce needs in the Sioux Falls area. However, relevant programs and convenient locations are not enough.

**We need more students to pursue high-demand degrees and join the workforce.**

**SOUTH DAKOTA IS PROJECTED TO EXPERIENCE A SHORTAGE OF 1,900 REGISTERED NURSES BY 2030.**

Nursing Education

**SOUTH DAKOTA HAS 36 AVAILABLE WORKERS FOR EVERY 100 OPEN JOBS.**

US Chamber of Commerce

**SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL DISTRICTS POSTED MORE THAN 3,000 POSITIONS DURING THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR.**

ASBSD Teacher Placement Center





# Strong Values, Thriving Communities

South Dakotans take pride in having a strong sense of community, resilience, and work ethic. These values, combined with an emphasis on human skills such as critical thinking, communication and creativity, are reflected in the liberal arts education students receive at the University of South Dakota.

USD offers an excellent educational experience empowering graduates to make an impact in their professions and communities. USD is committed to improving the quality of life of all South Dakotans, recognizing that **communities built on the value of education are stronger, safer and healthier.**

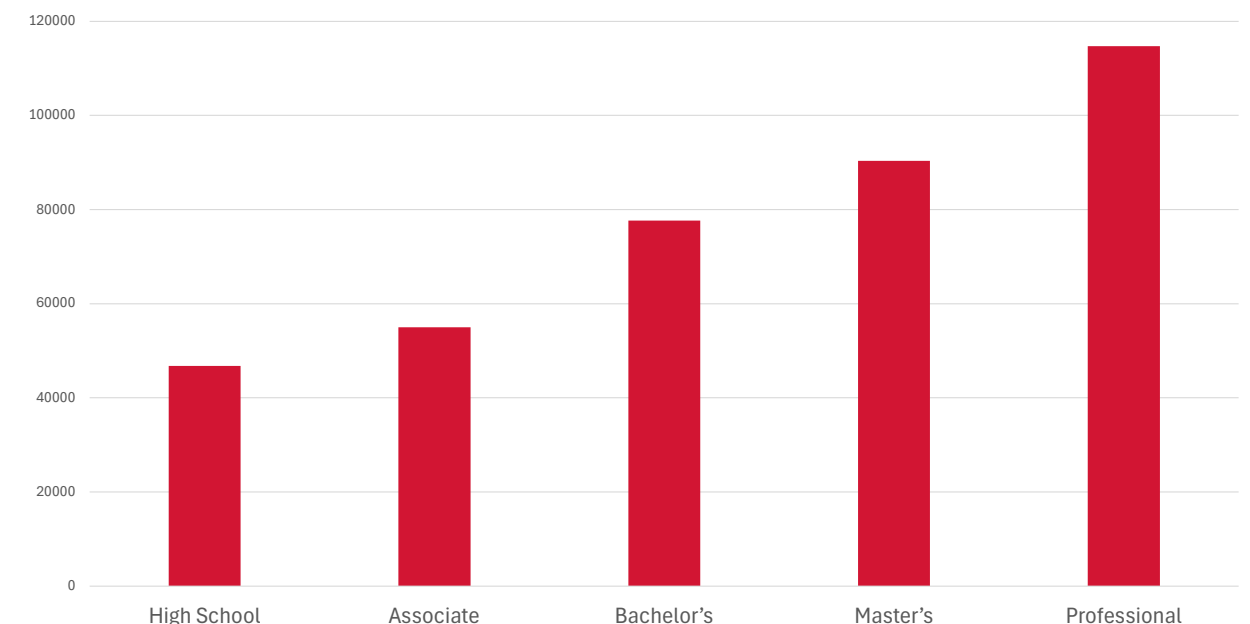
South Dakota's population, industry needs, and workforce demands are evolving. South Dakota's growth and prosperity depend on building a strong workforce equipped with the skills and confidence to lead in a changing world.

The University of South Dakota is well positioned to recruit, train and retain that workforce. Investing in workforce development is more important than ever.

*“Creating more pathways to higher education isn’t just an investment in our students’ futures; it’s an investment in our state’s economic resilience and quality of life.”*

— Scott Stern, '83  
Former Commissioner for Economic Development  
State of South Dakota

## Average Annual Earnings by Education Level



## Beyond Earnings

### HIGHER EDUCATION LEVELS ARE CORRELATED WITH

- Higher rates of volunteerism
- Lower unemployment
- Better health
- Lower rates of incarceration
- Higher tax contributions
- Higher voting participation
- Less reliance on social services

# BOLD VISION

## *Lasting Legacy*

In recognition of James W. Abbott's decades-long commitment to education and the betterment of the state of South Dakota, the University of South Dakota introduces the James W. Abbott Scholarship Fund. This program is designed to provide scholarship support to students and families who otherwise could not pursue higher education on account of financial barriers. This bold, \$20 million initiative will ensure more qualified students have access to higher education and training opportunities that support workforce needs throughout South Dakota.



**SUPPORTING  
WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT.**

*Investing in  
Tomorrow's  
Leaders.*

### Legacy of Leadership

Jim Abbott has made an impact on the lives of countless students, business leaders, public servants and community members. His commitment to improving the quality of life of all South Dakotans through education, research and economic development and community engagement is unmatched. It is fitting that we celebrate his legacy of service and leadership by establishing a program that supports the needs of students for decades to come.

**Join us in this effort to make  
higher education more accessible  
to all students and strengthen  
South Dakota's workforce.**



**Sheila K. Gestring**  
**USD PRESIDENT**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sheila K. Gestring".

## IMPACT

A \$20 million endowment will provide **\$800,000** in scholarship support annually. This money will be used to support full-time and part-time students in Vermillion and Sioux Falls.



UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTH DAKOTA**

---

FOUNDATION & ALUMNI