

North Dakota



Grand Forks Public Schools Career Impact Academy

Grand Forks, ND (2024)

The Grand Forks Public Schools (GFPS) Career Impact Academy (CIA) project involved the new construction of a 55,333 sq. ft. career and technical education center supporting the entire Grand Forks region. Previously, GFPS' Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming was located in multiple small individual spaces at high schools.

The CIA is a dedicated, centrally-located facility to support predominantly low-income high school and adult learners in the region with CTE classes in fields such as robotics, computer sciences, health services, and information technology. Students at the CIA have the opportunity to pursue industry credentials, dual/concurrent enrollment with higher education programs, and opportunities to participate in work-based learning experiences.

Expanding Career and Technical Education for low-income high school students and working adults

During the day, the building serves as a space to provide CTE classes for high school students, primarily in grades 10-12. In the evening, it provides training for unemployed and under-skilled adult learners to earn CTE industry certifications that can help secure employment in high-wage, in-demand careers. The CIA enables GFPS to expand the number of students served with CTE offerings by nearly 300 percent and it also offers new classes in advanced manufacturing, precision technologies, and aerospace.

The new facility serves students in seven additional school districts, including rural communities with students who previously could only access virtual CTE classes. In 2024, the CIA received national recognition when it was selected as one of 10 finalists nationwide in the U.S. Department of Education's Career Z Challenge for the CIA's innovative approach to broaden high quality work-based learning ecosystems for high school students.

The \$28.7 million construction project was the first redevelopment project in many years in Grand Forks' Northside neighborhood. Despite strong state and community support for the project, it faced a funding gap due to significant construction cost inflation. Without \$12 million in NMTC financing from Urban Research Park CDE (and an equity investment from Capital One, N.A.), the CIA would have been significantly delayed and reduced in scope, and would have provided substantially less benefit to the community.

The CIA is currently under construction and will be completed in 2025.

FINANCING

NMTC Financing: Urban Research Park CDE: \$12 million
Equity Investor: Capital One, N.A.
Total Project Cost: \$28.8 million

IMPACT

- 46 construction jobs
- 23.5 permanent FTE jobs created or retained
- 1,700 community members served each year (1,200 high school students and 500 adult learners)

COMMUNITY

- Poverty Rate: 31.9%
- Located in a Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Area

"What you're doing here will have a long-standing effect on schools, communities and the state," said Mark Wagner, assistant state director for the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education. The academy will offer students "access to training they need to succeed."

Source: Grand Forks Herald, 10/2/23.