

Grounded Research and Analysis from Northspan

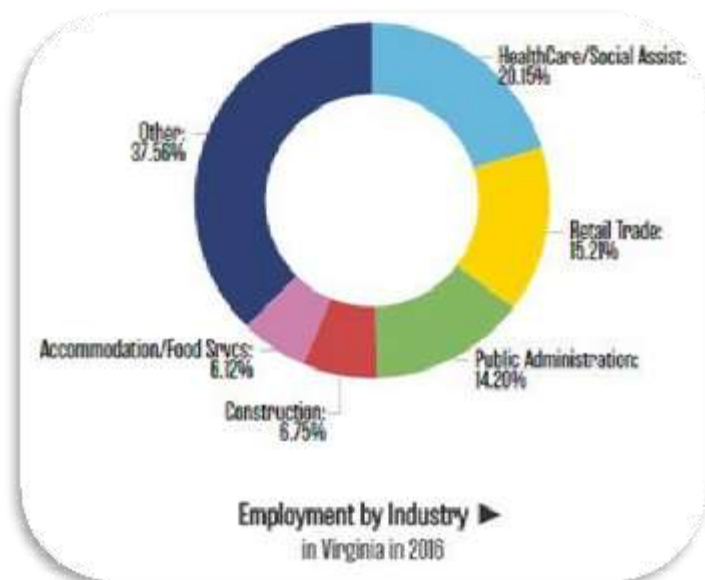
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At Northspan, we pride ourselves on our ability to step back and see the connections between data and decision-making, and in an analysis capacity that understands the nuances of our clients. This story about Duluth is just a taste of some of the questions that Northspan staff asks every day, and our approach to finding answers. Northspan has recently rededicated itself to an enhanced research capacity, and is available to assist partners across the Northland and the Upper Midwest.

Northspan's research capabilities range from analyses of single projects to broader comparative assessments of industry or regional trends. We conduct project feasibility studies, economic impact analyses, and industry cluster analyses, and can develop performance indicators. Our broad view of economic development encompasses both commercial and residential real estate studies, such as the downtown Duluth market study we recently completed for the Greater Downtown Council. Our data-informed approach places us on the front lines when communities need to respond to both opportunities and crises.



Data is an essential foundation to understanding economic trends, and Northspan has access to and familiarity with a wide range of public and private sources. We possess a comprehensive suite of ESRI demographic, workforce, and consumer data for a wide range of geographies through Northland Connection. We also subscribe to the Nexis database of company profiles. Our staff is skilled at negotiating public data tools such as those provided by the U.S. Census and American Community Survey, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

We also know we can't always do this work alone. Northspan's longstanding partnerships across the region give us access to additional resources as necessary. Past examples include a study of the economic impact of the leisure and hospitality industries on the Iron Range conducted jointly with the



University of Minnesota Duluth's Bureau of Business and Economic Research. We also facilitate large scale projects that bring in outside consultants, such as a [2015 Economic Adjustment Strategy for Koochiching County and International Falls](#), where we helped secure funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and worked hand in hand with a dedicated group of local leaders committed to a vision for new prosperity.

In an era in which we sometimes find ourselves drowning in data, Northspan knows how to pull the most valuable information out of that sea and think creatively about what it actually means. We are storytellers and strategic planners who know how to use data, not data people churning out numbers in isolation. We work with our clients to provide a coherent narrative that explains what exactly the data show, and aim to move the conversation toward constructive ends. We engage stakeholders as we work to establish policy recommendations, outline follow-up steps, and position research to guide policy and practice instead of merely gathering dust. As an organization grounded in our region with considerable experience in strategic planning and development, we also know how to bring these plans to fruition and guide planning processes toward measurable results.

For more information on Northspan's research and analysis capabilities, contact Karl Schuettler at 218.529.7564 or kschuettler@northspan.org.