

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 670

Short Title: Workforce Credential Grant Program/CCP. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Willis, Pickett, Campbell, and Schietzelt (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Higher Education, if favorable, Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and
Operations of the House

April 3, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A CAREER AND COLLEGE PATHWAYS INNOVATION
CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 115D of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
Article to read:

"Article 10.

"Workforce Grant Programs.

"§ 115D-150. Program established.

There is established the Career and College Pathways Innovation Challenge Grant Program (Program) to meet statewide educational attainment and workforce development goals by developing local and regional partnerships that foster innovations to accomplish the following:

- (1) Increase postsecondary enrollment and completion for both students enrolling directly from high school and adults returning to education.
- (2) Ensure alignment between educational options provided and labor market needs.
- (3) Eliminate educational opportunity gaps where they exist.

"§ 115D-151. Definitions.

The following definitions apply in this Article:

- (1) Approved grant award. – Awards granted to participating community colleges upon approval of a Program application by the State Board.
- (2) Participating community college. – A community college that submitted an application for the Program that was approved by the State Board.

"§ 115D-155. Grant program administration.

(a) The State Board of Community Colleges shall adopt necessary rules and policies to administer the Program, including for the following purposes:

- (1) The administration and awarding of grant funds, based on a competitive grant process, to local and regional partnerships that represent cross-sector collaborations among the Department of Public Instruction, the Community Colleges System Office, The University of North Carolina System Office, local governments, community-based organizations, employers, and other local entities. The design of the Program is to be developed in consultation with the following entities:
 - a. The Division of Workforce Solutions of the Department of Commerce.



- b. The North Carolina Community Colleges System Office.
 - c. The North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities.
 - d. The University of North Carolina System Office.
 - e. The leadership of MyFutureNC.
- (2) The use of funds and reporting of expenditures by participating community colleges. In awarding grant funds to participating community colleges, the State Board shall consider applications that propose to do the following:
- a. Plan and pilot innovative initiatives to raise educational attainment and decrease opportunity gaps.
 - b. Engage community-based organizations and resources.
 - c. Expand the use of work-based learning.
 - d. Provide financial support to cover (i) expenses beyond educational tuition and fees and (ii) other services and supports to encourage students to enroll and to complete education and training.
 - e. Provide local matching funds.
- (3) The monitoring and control of spending grant funds, including support and technical assistance to participating community colleges.
- (b) Up to four percent (4%) of the funds appropriated to the Community Colleges System Office for implementation of the Program in each fiscal year may be used for administrative costs.
- (c) Up to ten percent (10%) of the funds appropriated to the Community Colleges System Office for implementation of the Program in each fiscal year may be used for marketing and communications, including contracting with non-State entities for marketing and communications.

"§ 115D-160. Grant amounts.

(a) To the extent funds are made available for the Program, the State Board of Community Colleges shall award grants to participating community colleges in an amount up to the lesser of (i) the actual cost associated with an application by a community college or (ii) two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000).

(b) In the event that the funds appropriated for the Program are insufficient to award all approved grant awards, each award shall be reduced by an equivalent percentage to ensure that funding is awarded to all participating community colleges.

"§ 115D-165. Reporting requirement.

The State Board, in collaboration with the Department of Commerce, shall analyze data pertaining to the Program and shall report annually by July 15 to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the following information from the prior academic year:

- (1) The total dollar amount of grant funds awarded.
- (2) The total number of participating community colleges.
- (3) The progress of each local and regional partnership that partnered with a participating community college, as reflected in high school graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment and completion, job growth, and labor market alignment, with data being disaggregated by income, race, ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics, where available."

SECTION 2.(a) Notwithstanding G.S. 115D-160, as enacted by this act, for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 fiscal years, the State Board of Community Colleges shall allocate a total of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) to be directed to participating community colleges in the following areas affected by Hurricane Helene:

- (1) Alexander County.
- (2) Alleghany County.
- (3) Ashe County.
- (4) Avery County.

- 1 (5) Buncombe County.
- 2 (6) Burke County.
- 3 (7) Cabarrus County.
- 4 (8) Caldwell County.
- 5 (9) Catawba County.
- 6 (10) Cherokee County.
- 7 (11) Clay County.
- 8 (12) Cleveland County.
- 9 (13) Forsyth County.
- 10 (14) Gaston County.
- 11 (15) Graham County.
- 12 (16) Haywood County.
- 13 (17) Henderson County.
- 14 (18) Iredell County.
- 15 (19) Jackson County.
- 16 (20) Lee County.
- 17 (21) Lincoln County.
- 18 (22) Macon County.
- 19 (23) Madison County.
- 20 (24) McDowell County.
- 21 (25) Mecklenburg County.
- 22 (26) Mitchell County.
- 23 (27) Nash County.
- 24 (28) Polk County.
- 25 (29) Rowan County.
- 26 (30) Rutherford County.
- 27 (31) Stanly County.
- 28 (32) Surry County.
- 29 (33) Swain County.
- 30 (34) Transylvania County.
- 31 (35) Union County.
- 32 (36) Watauga County.
- 33 (37) Wilkes County.
- 34 (38) Yadkin County.
- 35 (39) Yancey County.
- 36 (40) The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

37 **SECTION 2.(b)** In the event that the total amount of grant awards for the 2025-2026
38 or 2026-2027 fiscal year to participating community colleges in areas listed in subsection (a) of
39 this section is less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000), the State Board may use those funds to
40 award grants to participating community colleges that are not located in those areas.

41 **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Community
42 Colleges System Office the sum of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in recurring funds for the
43 2025-2026 fiscal year to implement the provisions of this act.

44 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2025.