



## 2019 Legislative Priority #1 – Enhance Workforce Development

### Talking Points from the NC Community Colleges System

#### **FULLY FUND SHORT-TERM WORKFORCE TRAINING**

*Complete funding for short-term workforce training programs to achieve full funding parity with traditional academic programs by appropriating \$11,249,306 in recurring funds.*

**Background.** Prior to 2018, the FTE value for curriculum (for credit) programs was 34% higher than the FTE value for continuing education programs. Therefore, colleges often choose to offer vocational and trade programs in a credit format which required students to select sequential courses over two to six semesters rather than a short-term training course(s).

As part of the 2018 Budget Priorities, the NC Community College System requested \$16,525,254 in recurring funds to fund short-term workforce training programs at the same rate as curriculum programs for Tiers 1A, 1B, and 2 courses that lead to State or industry-recognized credentials. In the final budget, the General Assembly appropriated \$6,389,425 in recurring funds and \$8,283,552 in non-recurring (one-time) funds toward this priority.

**Talking Points.** Full funding for short-term workforce training programs will allow colleges to be more responsive and flexible to local business and industry needs since programs can be started quickly.

- Scheduling can be done around the needs of business and industry and students instead of being bound by the traditional academic calendar.
- Colleges do not have to seek approval from the State Board of Community Colleges or SACS (Southern Assn. of Colleges & Schools) to start courses.

**Examples:** *Electrical Lineman, Truck Driver Training, HVAC, Electrical Wiring, Plumber, Carpentry, Building Construction, Welding, Auto Body Repair, Automotive Mechanics, Cybersecurity, BLET, EMT, Paramedic, Firefighter, Nurse Aide, Pharmacy Technician.*

## EXPAND CAREER COACH PROGRAM

*Expand the NC Career Coach Program by funding additional career coaches and eliminating or reducing the local match for colleges in economically distressed areas.*

**Background.** The NC Career Coach Program was established in 2015 by the General Assembly. The purpose of the Program is to place Career Coaches in high schools to assist students with determining career goals and identifying community college programs that align with those goals. The Program is a partnership between local boards of education and local community colleges; however, Career Coaches are community college employees.

Funds are awarded through an application process based on local workforce needs, targeting of resources to enhance economic activity, and geographic diversity. The total State funding is \$2,893,214. State funds for Career Coaches must be matched dollar-for-dollar with non-State funds. However, colleges have reported that the dollar-for-dollar match requirement is a significant barrier, especially for small, rural colleges that have limited access to county funds or private funding sources.

Funds are awarded on a State fiscal year basis. Because of the limited amount of funds available, compared to the number of community colleges and LEAs in the State, funding has been awarded in two-year cohorts but will be changing to a three-year cohort beginning July 1, 2019. Any college, including colleges that are already receiving Career Coach funds, may apply for funding during each application period. As of July 1, 2018, there were 64 Career Coaches across the State.

### **Talking Points.**

- Career Coaches have helped students identify career goals which is especially important for students who do not plan to attend a four-year institution.
- Career Coaches are an important tool in closing the skills gap for local employers. Coaches meet one-on-one with students and engage with local employers to align student interests with employer needs.
- Expansion of the Career Coach Program, along with the reduction or elimination of the matching requirement for colleges in economically distressed areas, will allow more students, especially those in rural areas, to benefit from the Program.

*Examples: Career Coaches have introduced students to apprenticeship programs; engaged with local business and industry to identify needs and promote these careers to students; given students the opportunity to attend workshops, participate in job shadowing, and visit with local business and industry. However, some colleges have not applied for Career Coach funds because of the match requirement while at least 5 colleges were selected but could not participate due to a loss of matching funds.*