



NC Job Ready

NC Job Ready: Building a Stronger Workforce

Business CEOs in North Carolina and across the globe say their number one priority for creating new jobs is a well-trained workforce. Hearing that call, Governor Roy Cooper's budget provides \$60 million for the NC Job Ready Fund to train and grow our state's talented workforce. In February, Governor Cooper laid out his key principles for improving North Carolina's workforce: providing education and skills training, partnering with employers to prepare workers for evolving industries, and tapping into local innovation. Read more about the NC Job Ready initiative [HERE](#).

NC GROW - Providing Financial Assistance for Job Training in High-Demand Fields

Many of the good-paying jobs available today require skilled workers with specialized training. Governor Cooper's budget establishes a \$30 million financial aid program to provide free training for high-demand fields. The program, called NC GROW (Getting Ready for Opportunities in the Workforce), will help cover tuition and selected fees for students pursuing training in high-demand fields. The Community College System and Department of Commerce will identify industries with high demand for skilled workers, including construction, health sciences, information technology and manufacturing.

Finish Line Grants - Helping Students Complete Higher Education Degrees

North Carolina's community colleges and four-year colleges and universities are opening doors for students all across the state. But too often, financial emergencies like unexpected healthcare costs, childcare expenses, or car breakdowns prevent students who are on the cusp of graduating from reaching that milestone. Governor Cooper's \$20 million Finish Line Grants Program will help students complete their degrees when facing unforeseen financial challenges. Funds can be used for course materials, housing, medical needs, dependent care, or other financial emergencies that students face through no fault of their own.

Community college students who are within 15 credit hours of completing a degree will be eligible to receive up to \$1,000 per semester. \$5 million will be set aside to help at least 5,000 community college students complete their training.

Students at UNC System institutions and independent colleges and universities who are within 30 credit hours of graduating and have maintained a minimum GPA will be eligible for grants of up to \$1,000 per semester. \$15 million will be available (\$10 million for UNC institutions and \$5 million for independent colleges) to help at least 15,000 students complete their undergraduate degrees.

Employer Training Fund - Supporting Employer Innovation and Workplace Training

Employers themselves know the most about the skills industries require. Governor Cooper's budget provides \$10 million for a competitive grant program to assist employers in addressing workforce training needs and employee skill gaps. Funds may be used to support work-based learning initiatives like flexible, paid internship and employment opportunities for students, apprenticeship programs, and "up-skill/back-fill" projects to help current employees develop the skills needed to fill new roles and back-fill job openings with new hires. The Department of Commerce will collaborate with Workforce Development Boards, the NC Community College System, employers and other industry partners to design and implement the grant program.