



NC Career Coach Program

**Annual Report to the
Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee**

Submitted by The State Board of Community Colleges

As Required by GS 115D-21.5(d)

September 1, 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North Carolina Community College System administers the Career Coach Program, which places community college Career Coaches in high schools to assist students with determining career goals and identifying educational pathways enabling students to achieve these goals. Since the Program's inception in 2015, the General Assembly has shown a commitment to the Program going from an initial \$500,000 appropriation to a total of \$5,600,000 in 2022 with an additional \$230,000 from a partnership with the University of North Carolina System Office Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP).

North Carolina General Statute 115D-21.5 establishes the NC Career Coach Program. The purpose of the Program is to place Career Coaches employed by community colleges in high schools to assist students with determining career goals and identifying community college programs that align with those goals. The Career Coach Program is a partnership between local boards of education and community colleges. Career Coach funds are awarded through an application process based on the following: 1) consideration of the workforce needs of business and industry in the region; 2) targeting resources to enhance ongoing economic activity within the community college service area and surrounding counties; and 3) geographic diversity of awards.

As of July 1, 2025, the North Carolina Career Coach Program consists of ninety-two (92) Career Coaches strategically placed across forty-five (45) community colleges. During the 2024-2025 academic year, these coaches provided services to 31,583 students across sixty-four (64) Local Education Agencies (LEAs), conducting a total of 39,052 individual student engagements. Additionally, Career Coaches facilitated 2,063 group engagements and collaborated on 701 workforce engagement activities, further strengthening the connection between education and local workforce needs.

The NC Career Coach program experienced an 57% increase in students served over the previous reporting year (2023-2024).

While the program has experienced significant growth and continues to demonstrate measurable success, persistent barriers hinder its ability to maximize impact. Challenges such as inconsistent access to PowerSchool and Infinite Campus for efficient data collection remain ongoing. Moreover, staff turnover has emerged as a critical issue, largely due to the expansive range of responsibilities assigned to Career Coaches. These factors highlight the need for strategic programmatic adjustments, including expanding the number of Career Coaches, to ensure sustainable support structures and maintain high-quality service delivery across the state.

BARRIERS

The NC Career Coach program has received positive responses from both community colleges and employers. However, there are barriers to access for colleges and LEAs.

Match Requirement. Effective July 1, 2019, Senate Bill 61 (Section 3.3) adjusted the matching formula (G.S. 115D21.5(c)(2) b.) based on county tiers. While this was a tremendous show of support from the General Assembly, the dollar-for-dollar matching requirement is still a significant barrier from some colleges, especially small, rural colleges that have limited access to county funds or private funding sources.

Turnover. The program experienced staff turnover this year, primarily attributed to the demanding scope of responsibilities placed on Career Coaches who are assigned to multiple high schools while also managing workforce engagement initiatives. Balancing individualized student support across several campuses, alongside building and maintaining partnerships with local industry and workforce development boards, has led to increased workload and professional burnout.

This dual-focus role, while critical to student success and workforce alignment, underscores the need for a more sustainable staffing model. Expanding the number of Career Coaches would allow for more focused school presentations, deeper student engagement, and strengthened workforce collaborations. Addressing this structural capacity issue is essential to improve staff retention, maintain high levels of service quality, and fully realize the program's impact on student career readiness and regional workforce needs.

OUTCOMES

The North Carolina Career Coach Program continues to demonstrate meaningful impact in guiding high school students toward viable and informed career pathways. Despite operating with a limited cohort of ninety-two (92) Career Coaches statewide, the program's broad deployment across forty-five (45) community colleges and sixty-four (64) Local Education Agencies (LEAs) reflects its strategic reach. Throughout the 2024-2025 academic year, Career Coaches engaged 31,583 students through individual advising, resulting in a total of 39,052 individual student engagements. Additionally, coaches facilitated 2,063 group engagements and collaborated on 701 workforce engagement activities, ensuring that student advising is intentionally aligned with local labor market needs and emerging industry trends.

The program's dual focus on student pathway development and workforce alignment is evidenced by the increasing number of students enrolling in dual enrollment programs, career

and technical education (CTE) pathways, and work-based learning opportunities. These outcomes highlight the critical role Career Coaches play in bridging the gap between secondary education, post-secondary credential attainment, and workforce readiness.

To capture a comprehensive picture of local-level impact, participating colleges submitted qualitative narratives outlining program strengths and ongoing collaborations (See Appendix 2). These narratives showcase innovative practices implemented by Career Coaches to personalize student support, foster meaningful employer partnerships, and creatively navigate resource limitations, particularly in rural communities.

However, persistent challenges continue to affect program sustainability and scalability. Difficulties in meeting the required local funding match, especially among small and rural colleges, present significant barriers to program expansion. Furthermore, staff retention remains a pressing concern. The expansive scope of responsibilities—serving multiple high schools while simultaneously managing workforce engagement initiatives—places considerable demands on Career Coaches, contributing to turnover and limiting long-term relationship building within schools and communities. These challenges underscore the necessity of re-evaluating program capacity and support structures to ensure the continued success and growth of the Career Coach model across North Carolina.

NEXT STEPS & STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure the continued success and scalability of the North Carolina Career Coach Program, strategic investments and structural adjustments are essential. The current staffing model, though effective in demonstrating impact, is not sustainable given the expansive responsibilities placed on the existing ninety-two (92) Career Coaches. As the demand for individualized student engagement, career exploration, and workforce alignment continues to grow, so too must the program's capacity to deliver these services equitably across all regions of the state.

1. Increase Career Coach Capacity

Expanding the number of Career Coaches will allow for a more focused deployment model, reducing the number of high schools each coach serves and enabling deeper, more consistent student engagement. This increase in staffing will also enhance workforce partnerships by providing coaches with the bandwidth to cultivate and maintain meaningful employer relationships, which are critical for aligning educational pathways with regional workforce needs. Currently, our program serves 64 of the 115 LEAs in North Carolina. Increasing our

capacity to at least one coach in each LEA would widen the impact on underserved areas of our state.

2. Address Rural Funding Challenges

The current requirement for a local funding match presents a disproportionate barrier for small and rural colleges, limiting their ability to participate fully in the program. Exploring expanded funding, including state-level investments, or public-private partnerships will be vital to expanding access in underserved communities.

3. Strengthen Data Access and Reporting

Reliable access to PowerSchool and Infinite Campus remains a challenge, impeding efficient data collection and impact reporting. Collaborating with state education agencies to streamline access protocols and integrate data systems will enhance the program's ability to track student outcomes, measure return on investment, and inform continuous improvement efforts.

4. Develop a Career Coach Retention Strategy

High turnover rates among Career Coaches threaten the program's continuity and long-term success. A comprehensive retention strategy—including manageable caseloads, professional development opportunities, competitive compensation, and recognition initiatives—will be critical in fostering job satisfaction and maintaining a skilled, committed coaching workforce.

By addressing these strategic priorities, the North Carolina Career Coach Program can build on its current successes, ensuring sustained impact on student career readiness and strengthening the talent pipeline for North Carolina's workforce.

STATE FUNDING

State funds for Career Coaches are allocated utilizing the Department of Commerce economic county tier designation. The tier is determined by the location of the local school administrative unit the career coach serves. Tier 1 counties require no local match, Tier 2 counties require one dollar of local funds for every two dollars of state funds, and Tier 3 counties require one dollar of local funds for every dollar of state funds. State funds may be used for salary, benefits, support for the advising process, and all other expenses related to the employment of the career coach.

Year	Total Recurring Funding
2015-16	\$500,000
2016-17	\$1,000,000
2017-18	\$2,100,000
2018-19	\$2,800,000
2019-20	\$2,900,000
2020-21	\$3,500,000
2021-2022	\$5,600,000
2022-2023	\$5,600,000
2023-2024	\$5,655,000

Application & Award of Funds

- **Application Process:** Since funding is not sufficient to provide Career Coaches at every college and in every LEA, funding is allocated on an RFP basis. Interested colleges must submit an application that includes the requirements of G.S. 115D-21.5(c) as well as the following additional components:
 - A deployment plan describing how NC Career Coaches will:
 - Address targeted need in community served
 - Will be sufficiently supported when serving at the LEA location
 - Effectively and appropriately serves local school administrative service area based on rationale supported by local community leaders.
 - Ensure that the number of Coach(es) requested can effectively serve the LEA population
 - A professional development plan that:
 - Prepares Career Coaches to work in a high school setting;

- Ensures Career Coaches are aware of and have the tools and resources to remain current in their knowledge of career opportunities and required education and training; and,
 - Prepares Career Coaches to serve as effective advisors as college personnel in a high school setting.
 - Ensures that Career Coaches develop and maintain a relationship with local business and industry leaders.
- A plan for communicating with stakeholders, including high school students, high school and middle school faculty and staff, parents, guardians, and area employers.
- An evaluation plan including expected outcomes.
- **Advisory Committee Review:** The Advisory Committee required by G.S. 115D-21.5(c)(1) reviews the applications. This committee is made up of representatives from the NC Community College System, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the NC Department of Commerce, and at least three representatives of the business community. The committee evaluates applications based upon the following:
 - Consideration of the workforce needs of business and industry in the region.
 - Targeting resources to enhance on-going economic activity within the community college service area and surrounding counties.
 - Quality of the deployment, professional development, and communication plans.
 - Geographic diversity of awards.
- **Award & Duration of Funding:** The State Board of Community Colleges awards Career Coach funds based upon the recommendations of the Advisory Committee. 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 is awarded in three-year cohorts. Any college, including colleges that are already receiving Career Coach funds, may apply for funding during each application period. Although not optimal, the three-year limit on funding does allow additional colleges to apply and allows the Advisory Committee to evaluate the success of the Career Coaches for colleges previously receiving funding.

PARTICIPANTS

2023-28 COHORT PARTICIPANTS

Effective July 1, 2023, the General Assembly appropriated \$ 5,655,000 to the NC Career Coach Program for FY 2023-24, FY 2024-25, FY 2025-26, FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28. During the 2024-25 academic year, a total of ninety-two (92) Career Coaches at forty-five (45) Community Colleges served students at sixty-four (64) LEAs. A new cohort model was implemented beginning July 1, 2023, that offered an allocation to colleges that applied for the program and a competitive process for the remaining funds.

TABLE 2.

2023-28 COHORT APPLICANTS	
COMMUNITY COLLEGE	LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY
Asheville-Buncombe Tech	Madison County Schools
Beaufort County	Hyde and Tyrell County Schools
Bladen	Bladen County Schools
Blue Ridge	Henderson County Public Schools & Transylvania County Schools
Brunswick	Brunswick County Public Schools
Caldwell	Caldwell County Schools
Cape Fear	New Hanover Schools
Carteret	Carteret County Public Schools
Central Carolina	Harnett County Schools & Lee County Schools
Central Piedmont	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
Cleveland	Cleveland County Schools
College of The Albemarle	Edenton-Chowan Public Schools and Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools
Craven	Craven County Schools
Davidson-Davie	Davie County Schools & Davidson County Schools
Durham	Orange County Schools
Edgecombe	Edgecombe County Public Schools and North East Carolina Prep
Fayetteville Tech	Cumberland County Public Schools
Forsyth	Winston-Salem-Forsyth County Schools
Gaston	Gaston County Schools & Lincoln County Schools
Halifax	Roanoke Rapids Graded School District
Haywood	Haywood County School System
Isothermal	Rutherford County Schools & Polk County Schools
James Sprunt	Duplin County Schools
Lenoir	Greene County Schools & Lenoir County Public Schools

2023-28 COHORT APPLICANTS	
COMMUNITY COLLEGE	LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY
Martin	Bertie County Schools & Martin County Schools
McDowell	McDowell County Schools
Mitchell	Iredell-Statesville Public Schools
Piedmont	Caswell County Schools & Person County Schools
Pitt	Pitt County Schools
Randolph	Randolph County School System
Richmond	Richmond County Schools & Scotland County Schools
Robeson	Public Schools of Robeson County
Rockingham	Rockingham County Public Schools
Rowan-Cabarrus	Kannapolis City Schools & Rowan-Salisbury Schools
Sampson	Clinton City Schools & Sampson County Schools
Sandhills	Hoke County Schools
South Piedmont	Anson County Schools & Union County Public Schools
Southeastern	Columbus County & Whiteville City Schools
Southwestern	Jackson County Schools & Swain County Schools
Tri-County	Cherokee County Schools & Graham County Schools
Wake Tech	Wake County Public Schools
Wayne	Wayne County Public Schools
Western Piedmont	Burke County Public Schools
Wilkes	Wilkes County Schools
Wilson	Wilson County Schools
45 Colleges	64 LEAs

Since its inception in 2015, the North Carolina Career Coach Program has demonstrated significant success in guiding high school students toward meaningful postsecondary pathways and workforce opportunities. The program's strength lies in its collaborative model, which brings together community colleges, local education agencies, and external educational partners to provide students with individualized career exploration, academic planning, and connections to in-demand industries. Through this coordinated effort, Career Coaches have become a vital resource in bridging the transition from high school to college and career, fostering stronger alignment between education and workforce needs, and supporting the state's broader goal of increasing educational attainment.

TOTAL STATEWIDE CAREER COACHES AS OF JULY 1, 2025

TABLE 5.

COLLEGE (REGION)	TOTAL # OF COACHES AS OF 7/1/25	FY 24-25 AWARD*	MATCHING FUND SOURCE
Asheville-Buncombe Tech (Western)	1	\$ 90,000	Madison County Schools Funds
Beaufort County – (Eastern)	2	\$ 190,000	No match required (Tier 1)
Beaufort County – Washington Co. (Eastern)	1	\$ 81,935 (GEAR UP)	No match required (Tier 1)
Bladen (Eastern)	2	\$ 161,730	No match required (Tier 1)
Blue Ridge (Western)	2	\$ 130,914	County Funds
Brunswick (Eastern)	2	\$ 77,260	College Institutional Funds
Caldwell (Western)	2	\$ 164,152	County Funds
Cape Fear (Eastern)	1	\$ 42,466	College Institutional Funds
Carteret (Eastern)	2	\$ 87,936	College Institutional Funds
Central Carolina (Central)	2	\$ 88,625	Institutional Funds
Central Piedmont (West)	1	\$ 39,582	Sugar Creek Charter School & College Foundation Funds
Cleveland (Western)	2	\$ 150,372	College Institutional Funds
College of The Albemarle (Eastern)	2	\$ 168,944	No match required (Tier 1)
College of The Albemarle (Eastern)	1	\$ 81,935 (GEAR UP)	No match required (Tier 1)
Craven (Eastern)	1	\$ 46,580	College Institutional Funds
Davidson-Davie Co. (Western)	3	\$ 126,000	County Funds
Durham (Central)	1	\$ 45,545	Local Funds

COLLEGE (REGION)	TOTAL # OF COACHES AS OF 7/1/25	FY 24-25 AWARD*	MATCHING FUND SOURCE
Edgecombe (Eastern)	2	\$ 180,160	College Institutional Funds
Fayetteville Technical (Central)	2	\$ 139,812	No match required (Tier 1)
Forsyth (Central)	2	\$ 111,914	College Foundation Funds
Gaston – (Western)	2	\$ 148,163	Gaston County & Lincoln County Schools
Halifax (Eastern)	1	\$ 92,596	College Institutional Funds
Haywood (Western)	2	\$ 114,001	College Foundation Funds
Isothermal (Western)	2	\$ 139,670	College Institutional Funds
James Sprunt (Eastern)	2	\$ 160,452	No match required (Tier 1)
Lenoir (Eastern)	2	\$ 168,309	No match required (Tier 1)
Martin – (Eastern)	2	\$ 163,546	No match required
McDowell (Western)	2	\$ 115,000	County Funds
Mitchell (Western)	1	\$ 39,765	College Institutional Funds
Piedmont (Central)	2	\$ 162,000	County funds
Pitt (Eastern)	2	\$ 97,910	College Institutional Funds
Randolph (Central)	3.5	\$ 176,000	College Institutional Funds
Richmond (Central)	2	\$ 157,584	No match required (Tier 1)
Robeson (Central)	2	\$ 188,854	No match required (Tier 1)
Rockingham (Central)	2	\$ 170,000	College Institutional Funds
Rowan-Cabarrus	2	\$ 182,458	College Institutional Funds

COLLEGE (REGION)	TOTAL # OF COACHES AS OF 7/1/25	FY 24-25 AWARD*	MATCHING FUND SOURCE
(Western)			
Sampson (Eastern)	3.5	\$ 172,230	No match required (Tier 1)
Sandhills (Central)	1	\$ 80,920	No match required (Tier 1)
South Piedmont (Central)	2	\$ 138,582	College Institutional Funds
South Piedmont (Central)	1	\$ 81,935 (GEAR UP)	College Institutional Funds
Southeastern (Eastern)	2	\$ 190,000	County funds & Columbus County Industry Group Funds
Southwestern (Western)	1	\$ 71,057	No match required (Tier 1)
Southwestern (Western)	1	\$ 81,935 (GEAR UP)	College Institutional Funds
Tri-County (Western)	2	\$ 123,554	No match required (Tier 1)
Wake Technical (Central)	2	\$ 86,298	College Foundation Funds
Wayne (Eastern)	1	\$ 93,000	No match required (Tier 1)
Western Piedmont (Western)	3	\$ 149,058	No match required (Tier 1)
Wilkes (Western)	2.5	\$ 95,000	No match required (Tier 1)
Wilson (Eastern)	1	\$ 88,472	No match required (Tier 1)

* Award amounts indicate the funding level at the time SBCC approved the award.
(See Appendix 2 for grouping by region.)

IMPACT DATA FOR 2024-2025

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Student engagement is a one-on-one session with a Career Coach discussing the student's career interests, identifying opportunities for deeper exploration and immersion, and developing a guided pathway towards appropriate course selection related to the student's career interest. In addition to student engagement, Career Coaches may also hold groups sessions and activities.

Beyond individual and group sessions, Career Coaches actively collaborate with high school counselors, teachers, and community college staff to create seamless connections between secondary and postsecondary education. These partnerships ensure that students have access to timely advising, work-based learning opportunities, and dual enrollment options that align with their career goals. As a result, students are better prepared to make informed decisions about their academic and career pathways, leading to increased enrollment in career-aligned programs.

TABLE 6.

COLLEGE (REGION)	NO. OF COACHES	INDIVIDUAL COACHING SESSIONS	GROUP COACHING SESSIONS*	HIGH SCHOOL
Asheville-Buncombe Tech (Western)	1	69	11	Madison HS & Madison Early College
Beaufort County (Eastern)	3	962	42	Columbia HS, Hyde Academy, Mattamuskeet HS, Washington County HS, Washington County Early College
Bladen (Eastern)	2	493	99	West Bladen HS, East Bladen HS, Bladen Early College
Blue Ridge (Western)	2	507	25	Brevard HS, Davidson River HS, East Henderson HS, North Henderson HS & Rosman HS
Brunswick (Eastern)	2	1061	31	North Brunswick HS, South Brunswick HS, West Brunswick HS, & Center for Applied Sciences and Technology
Caldwell (Western)	2	231	5	Caldwell Applied Sciences Academy & West Caldwell HS
Cape Fear (Eastern)	1	3227	90	Laney HS & New Hanover HS
Carteret (Eastern)	2	500	37	Croatan HS, East Carteret HS & West Carteret HS

COLLEGE (REGION)	NO. OF COACHES	INDIVIDUAL COACHING SESSIONS	GROUP COACHING SESSIONS*	HIGH SCHOOL
Central Carolina (Central)	2	751	23	Triton HS & Lee County HS
Central Piedmont (Central)	1	259	19	Sugar Creek Charter School
Cleveland (Western)	2	498	11	Burns HS, Cleveland Innovation, Crest HS, & Shelby HS
College of The Albemarle (Eastern)	3	725	74	John A. Holmes HS, Northeastern HS & Pasquotank County HS
Craven (Eastern)	1	77	14	New Bern HS
Davidson-Davie (Western)	3	638	87	Davie County HS, Ledford HS, Lexington City HS & Thomasville City HS
Durham (Central)	1	188	81	Cedar Ridge HS, Orange HS & Partnership Academy
Edgecombe (Eastern)	2	6823	59	North Edgecombe HS, Southwest Edgecombe HS, Edgecombe Early College, Northeast Carolina Prep School, Tarboro HS & Edge Academy of Health Sciences
Fayetteville Technical (Central)	2	50	2	Douglas Byrd HS, E.E. Smith HS, Seventy-First HS, South View HS & Westover HS
Forsyth (Central)	2	7	0	Carver HS, North Forsyth HS, Parkland Magnet HS & Winston Salem Preparatory Academy
Gaston (Western)	2	1738	67	Bessemer City HS, Hunter Huss HS, Lincolnton HS, North Gaston HS & West Lincoln HS
Halifax (Eastern)	1	147	32	Roanoke Rapids HS
Haywood (Western)	2	563	37	Pisgah HS & Tuscola HS
Isothermal (Western)	2	333	5	Chase HS, East Rutherford HS, Polk HS & R-S Central HS
James Sprunt (Eastern)	2	478	16	East Duplin HS, North Duplin HS, James Kenan HS & Wallace-Rose Hill HS

COLLEGE (REGION)	NO. OF COACHES	INDIVIDUAL COACHING SESSIONS	GROUP COACHING SESSIONS*	HIGH SCHOOL
Lenoir (Eastern)	2	778	75	Greene Central HS, Kinston HS, North Lenoir HS & South Lenoir HS
Martin (Eastern)	2	298	19	Bertie HS, Riverside HS & South Creek HS
McDowell (Western)	2	1608	50	McDowell HS
Mitchell (Western)	1	374	39	Statesville HS & West Iredell HS
Piedmont (Central)	2	407	60	Barlett-Yancey HS & Person HS
Pitt (Eastern)	2	293	36	Farmville Central HS, J.H. Rose HS, North Pitt HS & South Central HS
Randolph (Central)	3.5	2055	108	Asheboro HS, Eastern Randolph HS, Providence Grove HS, Randleman HS, Southwestern Randolph HS, Uwharrie Ridge & Wheatmore HS
Richmond (Central)	2	512	18	Richmond Senior HS & Scotland HS
Robeson (Central)	2	374	59	Fairmont HS & Red Springs HS
Rockingham (Central)	2	2042	79	Dalton McMichael HS, Morehead HS, Reidsville HS & Rockingham HS
Rowan-Cabarrus (Central)	2	308	43	A.L. Brown HS & North Rowan HS
Sampson (Eastern)	3.5	1674	74	Clinton HS, Hobbton HS, Lakewood HS, Midway HS & Union HS
Sandhills (Eastern)	1	339	15	Hoke County HS
South Piedmont (Central)	3	1650	25	Anson HS, Cuthbertson HS, Forest Hills HS, Monroe HS, Parkwood HS, Piedmont HS, Porter Ridge HS & Sun Valley HS
Southeastern (Eastern)	2	454	208	East Columbus HS, South Columbus HS, West Columbus HS, & Whiteville HS
Southwestern (Western)	2	344	0	Cherokee HS, Jackson County School of the Alternatives, Smoky Mountain HS, Summit Charter School, Swain County HS & Victory Christian Academy

COLLEGE (REGION)	NO. OF COACHES	INDIVIDUAL COACHING SESSIONS	GROUP COACHING SESSIONS*	HIGH SCHOOL
Tri-County (Western)	2	127	6	Murphy HS & Robbinsville HS
Wake Tech (Central)	2	513	40	Athens Drive HS, Garner HS, Rolesville HS & Sanderson HS
Wayne (Eastern)	1	408	47	Eastern Wayne HS & Goldsboro HS
Western Piedmont (Western)	3	2397	23	East Burke HS, Freedom HS, Patton HS, Draughn HS
Wilkes (Western)	2.5	1675	141	East Wilkes HS, North Wilkes HS & West Wilkes HS
Wilson (Eastern)	1	140	27	Beddingfield HS
TOTALS	92.5	39,052	2,063	147 HS, 64 LEAs

*Students served in a group setting such as classroom presentations, group tours, orientation sessions, etc.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Career Coaches have become a vital resource in bridging the transition from high school to college and career, fostering stronger alignment between education and workforce needs, and supporting the state's broader goal of increasing educational attainment. Career Coaches also cultivate partnerships with local employers, creating opportunities for students to engage in job shadowing, internships, and other hands-on experiences that connect classroom learning to real-world applications. These employer collaborations help ensure that career pathways are responsive to evolving workforce demands while exposing students to viable career options in their own communities.

By strengthening the link between education and industry, the program not only supports individual student success but also contributes to regional economic growth. Career Coaches served the community by engaging with the local workforce via meetings with local workforce leaders, chambers of commerce, and other business leaders. During the 2024-2025 academic year **701 documented workforce engagement activities** supported the adjustment to available pathways to better meet the state and local workforce need.

PATHWAY ENROLLMENTS

Students enrolled in a variety of high school Career & Technical Education (CTE) pathways and community college Career and College Promise (CCP) CTE pathways. Both high school and community college CTE pathways educate students in a variety of careers such as Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Biotechnology, Health Sciences, Information Technology, Robotics, Welding, and many other career opportunities. The community college CTP pathway serves students in careers requiring a bachelor's degree such as Engineering.

TABLE 7.

PATHWAY	2024-2025
High School – Career & Technical Education	72,916
Community College – Career & College Promise: Career & Technical Education	6,829
Community College – Career & College Promise: College Transfer Pathways	14,427
TOTALS	94,172



NC Career Coach Program
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APPENDIX 1
Career Coaches by Region

REGION	COLLEGE	TOTAL # OF COACHES AS OF 7/1/25	LEA	MATCHING FUND SOURCE
Central	Central Carolina	2	Harnett County & Lee County Schools	Institutional Funds
	Davidson-Davie	3	Davie County & Davidson County Schools	County Funds
	Durham Technical	1	Orange County Public Schools	Local Funds
	Fayetteville Technical	2	Cumberland County Schools	No match required
	Forsyth Technical	2	Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools	College Foundation Funds
	Piedmont	2	Caswell County Schools & Person County Schools	County funds
	Randolph	3.5	Asheboro City Schools & Randolph County School System	College Institutional Funds
	Richmond	2	Richmond and Scotland County Schools	No match required
	Robeson	2	Public Schools of Robeson County	No match required
	Rockingham	2	Rockingham County Public Schools	College Institutional Funds
	Sandhills	1	Hoke County Schools	No match required
	South Piedmont	3*	Anson County & Union County Public Schools	College Institutional Funds
Eastern	Wake Technical	2	Wake County Public Schools	College Foundation Funds
	Beaufort County	3*	Hyde County, Tyrell County & Washington County Schools	No match required

REGION	COLLEGE	TOTAL # OF COACHES AS OF 7/1/25	LEA	MATCHING FUND SOURCE
North Carolina	Bladen	2	Bladen County Schools	Local Funds
	Brunswick	2	Brunswick County Public Schools	College Institutional Funds
	Cape Fear	1	New Hanover County Schools	College Institutional Funds
	Carteret	2	Carteret County Public Schools	College Institutional Funds
	College of The Albemarle	3*	Edenton-Chowan Public Schools & Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools	No match required
	Craven	1	Craven County Schools	College Institutional Funds
	Edgecombe	2	Edgecombe County Public Schools & North East Prep	College Institutional Funds
	Halifax	1	Roanoke Rapids Graded School District	College Institutional Funds
	James Sprunt	2	Duplin County Schools	No match required
	Lenoir	2.5	Lenoir County Public Schools & Greene County Schools	College Institutional Funds, College Foundation Funds, Lenoir County Schools and Greene County Schools
	Martin	2	Bertie County & Martin County Schools	No match required
	Pitt	2	Pitt County Schools	College Institutional Funds
	Sampson	3.5	Clinton City Schools & Sampson County Schools	No match required
	Southeastern	2	Columbus County Schools & Whiteville City Schools	County funds and Columbus County Industry Group Funds
	Wayne	1	Wayne County Public Schools	No match required
	Wilson	1	Wilson County Schools	No match required

REGION	COLLEGE	TOTAL # OF COACHES AS OF 7/1/25	LEA	MATCHING FUND SOURCE
Western	Asheville-Buncombe Technical	1	Madison County Schools	Madison County Schools Funds
	Blue Ridge	2	Henderson County Schools & Transylvania County Schools	County Funds
	Caldwell	2	Caldwell County Schools	County Funds
	Central Piedmont	1	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Sugar Creek Charter School Funds & College Foundation Funds
	Cleveland	2	Cleveland County Schools	College Institutional Funds
	Gaston College	2	Gaston County Schools & Lincoln County Schools	Gaston County and Lincoln County Schools
	Haywood	2	Haywood County Schools	College Foundation Funds
	Isothermal	2	Polk County Schools & Rutherford County Schools	College Institutional Funds
	McDowell	2	McDowell County Schools	County Funds
	Mitchell	1	Iredell-Statesville Schools	College Institutional Funds
	Rowan-Cabarrus	2	Kannapolis City Schools & Rowan-Salisbury School System	College Institutional Funds
	Southwestern	2*	Jackson County Schools & Swain County Schools	College Institutional Funds
	Tri-County	2	Cherokee County Schools & Graham County Schools	No match required

REGION	COLLEGE	TOTAL # OF COACHES AS OF 7/1/25	LEA	MATCHING FUND SOURCE
	Western Piedmont	2	Burke County Public Schools	College Institutional Funds
	Wilkes	2.5	Wilkes County Schools	Alleghany County Funds & Private Donation

*This includes one GEAR UP funded NC Career Coach.

Appendix 2

Career Coach Narratives

Beaufort County Community College

As coach, I coordinated a field trip date for the Mattamuskeet School carpentry class to have a hands-on experience in boat building lab at BCCC, set up a drone demonstration for the ACA 111 class following the BCCC tour, scheduled a field trip to Martin Community College for a campus tour and more in depth tour of the Lineman, HVAC, Physical Therapy Assistant, and Equine Programs, and completed a field trip to the StemEast Aviation & Careers event at the Washington-Warren Airport on April 9, bringing 12 middle school students to the experience.

Gaston College

Our program purchased 4 VR Headsets to use inside the high schools with career exploration. We were also introduced to Transfr Trek mobile, a web-based platform to accompany the VR career exploration experience that includes interest inventory assessments, personalized career matches, and goal setting, local career data, and the ability to share your chosen pathway with family and teachers. The Trek Menu Builder helps you be able to select which simulations the students see in the headset. New trek simulation options are: Electrical Engineer, HVAC Technician, Certified Nursing Assistant, Cybersecurity Analyst, Phlebotomist, Plumber, Installation Maintenance and Repair Worker, Quality Control Analyst, Steelworker, Cosmetologist, Clinical Laboratory Technologist, & City Planner.

Also, the culmination of CTE Tuesday, the Rhino Roadmap to CTE Careers, is a Gaston College CTE Open House. Industry partners are invited to share space with their educational counterparts, and we open our campus to students and the public, increasing awareness and interaction with CTE careers. This year, over 23 companies participated.

Pitt Community College

One success this year was meeting with the Chamber of Commerce as it gave our coaches the chance to see what other local businesses are like in the area, so we can meet with them and can gather information that will be beneficial to our students.

Randolph Community College

This year, our program toured Greensboro Grasshoppers facilities and learned about employment opportunities for high school students, many of which could lead to career opportunities with this organization. Later in the year Metals II students from 2 high schools

came to RCC to hear about the Machining program & tour the Machining facilities. Students heard from faculty about the program & career opportunities. My role was to answer questions about CCP Machining certificates, diplomas, & Associate degrees.

We also coordinated a tour of Oliver Rubber with a follow-up meeting explaining the role of the company and how we can advise students to prepare academically to work at their company. I toured the Pemco Manufacturing facility & heard about opportunities for students to work at this company. Students who take classes in CNC Machining & Maintenance are candidates for employment.

Wayne Community College

Several industry tours were conducted with students this year including Wayne County Cooperative Extension, an NC State/N.C. A&T partnership delivering 4-H, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, nutrition, Master Gardener, environmental education, pesticide recertification, and local workshops; Holly Grove Farm: a family-owned goat dairy in Mount Olive producing farmstead chevre, raising ~1,000 goats (plus hogs and cattle), with on-farm cheese processing, gift shop, and educational tours; Casey Nursery, Inc.: a 90+-acre wholesale nursery in Goldsboro supplying container-grown and field-grown trees, shrubs, and ornamentals to landscapers and garden centers across the Southeast and Jericho Farms: a 300-acre wholesale nursery in Pikeville, NC growing B&B and container shrubs, trees, evergreens, perennials, and grasses; serving landscapers and garden centers East Coast-wide with branded plants like Knock Out®, Encore®, and Proven Winners.