



Community College Programs Serving IDD Students Annual Report

May 1, 2024

Programs & Student Services Division
North Carolina Community Colleges System Office
5001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-5001 [NCCommunityColleges.edu](https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu)

Annual Report, May 2024

Overview/Background

In 2021, a two- year pilot project began to provide opportunities for students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the community college system to earn credentials leading to increased employment outcomes.

Following the success of these two community college pilots, Catawba Valley Community College and Brunswick Community College, in 2022-23 Section 6.9 (a) Article 3 of Chapter 115D of the General Statutes was amended to establish a community college training program, based on the pilot colleges' strategies and outcomes for students with IDD. In the 2023-25 session, this new IDD Student Workforce Training Program was awarded \$3,963,094 in recurring funds for up to 15 community colleges.

In compliance with Section 6.9 of Session law 2023-134, the program exists to a) provide opportunities for students to earn credentials and b) increase employment outcomes for students with IDD by supporting participating colleges in creating and improving educational components which include (a) employability skills, and (b) work-based learning (e.g. practicums, apprenticeships, etc.). The goals of the program are to implement effective strategies to enhance student learning and student supports, including at least:

1. Establishing best practices for providing vocational training,
2. Providing financial and benefits counseling,
3. Developing strategies for integrating assistive technology,
4. Maximizing access, with supports, to credentials and degrees,
5. Identifying methods to integrate students into the campus community,
6. Determining needs and developing marketing and evaluation strategies.

Distribution of Funds to Community Colleges

Establish process for distribution

- Community College System Office staff members, working with the pilot colleges, developed the process. On November 14, 2023, a letter of Intent (LOI) invitation was sent to all 58 community colleges, asking interested colleges to submit an LOI by December 15, 2023. In addition to the pilot colleges, a total of 30 colleges submitted LOIs. A rubric was developed based on the six required elements in the program design and an additional three criteria based on clarity and coherence of the submission. A review team, comprised of the IDD system Office Project director, the project director at Catawba Valley Community College, and the site director at Brunswick Community College evaluated and scored each college's responses. Subsequently, each college was invited to participate in a virtual interview (January 10-12) to discuss potential participation in the program expansion. These virtual interviews were also scored and added to the point award from the LOI review.

- A total of 15 colleges, including the pilots, was recommended to the State Board of community colleges for funding at its February 16, 2024, meeting. The funded colleges are:

College	Allocation
Alamance Community College	\$194,000
Asheville-Buncombe Technical College	\$194,000
Brunswick Community College	\$266,450
Catawba Valley Community College	\$266,450
College of the Albemarle	\$194,000
Guilford Technical Community College	\$194,000
James Sprunt Community College	\$194,000
Johnston Community College	\$194,000
McDowell Technical Community College	\$194,000
Richmond Community College	\$194,000
Robeson Community College	\$194,000
Sandhills Community College	\$194,000
South Piedmont Community College	\$194,000
Stanly Community College	\$194,000
Wilkes Community College	\$194,000
Total Allocated to Colleges:	\$3,054,900
NCCCS	\$908,194
Total award	\$3,963,094

The total allocated was \$3,054,900. A total of \$908,194 was retained by the System Office to pay for staff positions required by the law. Remaining funds were allocated to professional development, evaluation, and marketing.

Budget forms outlining programmatic expenses were due to the System Office for approval on May 1, 2024.

Use of Funds at System Office

Personnel Hired

To carry out the requirements of the legislation, two full-time staff positions were hired, and a part-time position was also added. Each of the three staff members brings a unique and specialized skill set to the IDD Program team including expertise in program management, professional development and technical assistance, and pathway development.

- January 2024, State Director of IDD Programs hired.
- February 2024, Associate Director of IDD Programs hired.
- April 2024, Associate Director of Pathways and Partnerships was hired as a 60% employee. This is a shared position with College and Career Readiness/Title II/WIOA.

Professional Development Provided

As required in the legislation, the state level staff planned and executed a variety of professional development activities. These activities included virtual meetings and a daylong, in-person kick-off event facilitated by System Office staff which included presentations by local, state, and national subject matter experts.

- March 2024 - the System Office staff held weekly Teams meetings with 15 colleges
 - Topics for meetings included: marketing, legislative overview, budgets, and the Access to Achievement Coordinator position and job description.
- Three Teams meetings were scheduled.
- April 16, 2024 - IDD Training Program Kick-off held at Catawba Valley Community College.
 - 50 representatives from the 15 pioneer colleges attended the kick-off.
 - Subject matter experts presented on the following topics: person-centered planning, work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeship, integration, and program fidelity.
- April 17, 2024 - System Office staff and 32 representatives from the 15 pioneer colleges attended the North Carolina Post-Secondary Education Alliance Capacity-Building Summit at Catawba Valley Community College.
 - Participants attended small groups and roundtable discussions about the following topics: accreditation, leadership buy-in, integration strategies, comprehensive post-secondary transition programs, and the future of post-secondary education for students with IDD in North Carolina.
- May 2024 - bi-weekly Teams meetings with 15 funded colleges will resume
- July 2024 - a two-day professional development opportunity is planned for the Access to Achievement Coordinators

Individualized Professional Development and Technical Assistance Planned and Implemented

In order to strengthen relationships and rapport with the individual colleges, System Office staff will visit each of the 15 funded colleges. At these visits, System Office staff will offer individualized guidance and technical assistance with regards to planning and implementation of local programs. During these visits, the System Office staff will meet with local implementation teams and staff to assess the greatest needs of the colleges and to determine how to best assist them moving forward.

- Campus visits scheduled with all 15 funded colleges
- April 29, 2024, System Office staff visits Brunswick Community College
- April 30, 2024, System Office staff visits Robeson Community College

Advisory Council Established

The purpose of the council is to assist and promote program success by enhancing collaboration and coordination between stakeholders and service providers concerning post-secondary career development and training opportunities for community college students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

- Invitations sent to prospective Advisory Council members
- Council representatives will include representatives from business and industry, System Office staff and board, local colleges, state agencies, community agencies, and national subject matter experts
- June 20, 2024 - first meeting of Advisory Council

Conclusion

Less than six months ago, the legislature generously funded the North Carolina Community College System to launch a statewide training program for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Since then, extensive action has been taken disburse funds to colleges and implement practices, policies and procedures while paying careful attention to the six elements outlined in the legislation. Planning has been collaborative and diligent, ensuring that all goals are being met and outcomes will be present for individuals, colleges and our business and industry partners. Contracts with marketing firms are being developed to ensure that potential students and their families will be aware of the opportunities available to them. Additionally, negotiations have begun to contract for outside evaluation which will assist in developing success metrics and guide decisions going forward. With the pillars of programmatic design and administrative functions being firmly set, the coming quarters are sure to expose individual and programmatic achievements that will lead to transformational generational change for students, institutions, and communities.