

#Align4NCWorks

ULTIMATE GOAL: Ensure that North Carolina is #1 in Workforce.

GOAL #1: Increase and sustain employer engagement as part of an integrated, customer-centered workforce system. (SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Plan)

OBJ #1.A. Ensure the workforce system is relevant, valuable and easy to access by the business community. (SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Plan)

OUTCOME: North Carolina's Business and Industry recognizes the value add of all workforce development partners; understands how to access education, training and services; and feels as though their needs are addressed.

ACT.STEP 1.A.i. In collaboration with workforce and education partners, develop protocols for serving businesses as a unified business services team with joint marketing materials, and promote use of a single Customer Relations Management tool.

(SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan and BEST NC Working Group Recommendations)

ACT.STEP 1.A.ii. In collaboration with workforce and education partners, develop and implement a system-wide and consistent business outreach strategy. (SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan)

ACT.STEP 1.A.iii. Analyze results from the "1,000 in 100" initiative and identify continued opportunities for success.

OBJ #1.B. Increase business and industry's commitment to contribute to curriculum design, pathway implementation and sponsorship of work-based learning.

(SOURCE: State Board of Education Plan)

OUTCOME: North Carolina's Business and Industry is committed to becoming a contributing partner in the solution of meeting workforce needs.

ACT. STEP 1.B.i. Create protocols for business representatives, business associations and industry sector groups to contribute to the design and delivery of top-quality coursework at all levels.

(SOURCE: BEST NC Working Group Recommendations and Proposed NC Education Vision)

ACT. STEP 1.B.ii. Increase employer engagement in the identification and support of work-based learning.

OBJ #1.C. Develop and enhance connections between workforce development and economic development to strengthen local economies. (SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Plan)

OUTCOME: Strategic solutions for current and future workforce needs will be identified through a partnership between economic development organizations and workforce development partners.

ACT. STEP 1.C.i. Work with workforce and economic development partners to ensure that business outreach protocols are focused on economic priorities. (SOURCE: NGA proposal)

ACT. STEP 1.C.ii. With the involvement of business and industry, provide training and development to education/workforce partners on how to build and manage industry partnerships and business advisory boards. (SOURCE: BEST NC Working Group Recommendations)

GOAL #2: Connect students to quality careers and employers to quality employees.

OBJ. 2.A. Enhance, integrate and market NC's education and workforce development programs, initiatives and resources to maximize talent connections. (SOURCE: NC Jobs Plan)

OUTCOME: Through a robust talent management system, North Carolina's Business and Industry will have the tools to connect to well-skilled, credentialed citizens.

ACT. STEP 2.A.i. Increase the number of students enrolled in NCWorks Online.

ACT. STEP 2.A.ii. Increase the number of businesses that list job openings in NCWorks Online.

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ACT. STEP 2.A.iii. Explore opportunities for increased collaboration between community college employability training/career services and NCWorks Career Centers.

GOAL #3: Ensure education and training address and validate skill and competency needs and attainment.

OBJ. 3.A. Based upon local needs, focus resources on the identification and alignment of career pathways to help individuals gain the credentials, skills and experience for in-demand occupations or entrepreneurship opportunities. (SOURCE: NC Works Strategic Action Plan)

OUTCOME: *Students will gain industry required (and validated) skills and competencies needed to obtain high paying jobs and careers in NC.*

ACT. STEP 3.A.i. Work across workforce programs and levels of education to weave together clear and coherent education/training pathways.

ACT. STEP 3.A.ii. Enhance NC's workforce development programs through partnership with NC Community College's Small Business Network to include entrepreneurship skills training.

(SOURCE: NC Jobs Plan)

OBJ. 3.B. Develop, enhance, and maintain aligned, quality STEM, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Workforce Development programs and assessments based on industry standards that are relevant, current, and meet the needs of businesses and students. (SOURCE: State Board of Education Plan)

OUTCOME: *The skills gap in NC will be significantly reduced by the output of students, from our education systems, possessing industry required and validated skills and competencies.*

ACT. STEP 3.B.i. Use employer input combined with economic research on occupational skill needs to drive education, training and broader workforce development programming and assessments.

ACT. STEP 3.B.ii. Increase employability of students and productivity of workers by integrating skill standards and competencies as defined by industry and/or third-party industry recognized credentials.

OBJ 3.C. Increase the number of students leaving the community college system with an in-demand job-ready credential (e.g. third-party certification, state licensure, degree, certificate, or diploma).

(SOURCE: NC Chamber plan)

OUTCOME: *The skills gap in NC will be significantly reduced by the output of students from our education systems, possessing industry required and validated skills and competencies.*

ACT. STEP 3.C.i. Work with industry to identify appropriate industry certifications that validate in-demand job skills and competencies.

ACT. STEP 3.C.ii. Support an increase in the number of students graduating from high school with an industry-recognized credential and pursuing a CTE concentration in college.

(SOURCE: State Board of Education Plan)

ACT. STEP 3.C.iii. Increase the number of community college students that attain a credential to further their success toward career goals.

ACT. STEP 3.C.iv. Continue to support the implementation of WorkKeys assessments throughout community college offerings to increase the number of students that are career and workplace ready.

(SOURCE: State Board of Education Plan)

OBJ 3.D. Ensure alignment of university, community college and K-12 public school curriculum offerings to meet local employers' short-term and long-term workforce needs.

(SOURCE: NC Jobs Plan)

OUTCOME: *Coherent and articulated career pathways between NC's education systems will produce a highly skilled workforce meeting the needs of NC's industry and businesses.*

ACT. STEP 3.D.i. Expand the community college transfer pipeline.

(SOURCE: UNC Plan 2013-18)

ACT. STEP 3.D.ii. Create a transcript warehouse to improve the efficient transfer of course credit between UNC and community colleges and among UNC campuses.

(SOURCE: UNC Plan 2013-18)

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GOAL #4: Expand work-based learning opportunities.

OBJ 4.A. Prepare "job-ready" students through appropriate work-based learning formats (internships, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, etc.). (SOURCE: UNC Plan 2013-18)

OUTCOME: Students will gain improved soft and technical skills due to the applied nature of work-based learning.

ACT. STEP 4.A.i. Increase work-based learning opportunities for students and the percentage of students completing programs with a work-based experience. (SOURCE: State Board of Education Plan)

OBJ 4.B. Identify back-to-industry opportunities for teachers/instructors to help them stay current with industry trends, enhance curriculum appropriately, and integrate work-based learning into their programs.

(SOURCE: BEST NC Working Group Recommendations)

OUTCOME: Instructors will gain (and maintain) relative current skills sets that can be applied in their educational program areas.

ACT. STEP 4.B.i. Drawing on existing best practices, work with industry partners to develop a portfolio of immersion in industry experiences. (SOURCE: BEST NC Working Group Recommendations)

OBJ 4.C. Develop new or enhance existing pathways through NCWorks Career Pathways that include work-based learning opportunities. (SOURCE: State Board of Education Plan)

OUTCOME: NC Career Pathways that include relevant work-based learning will ensure students obtain necessary soft and technical skills required by NC business and industry.

ACT. STEP 4.C.i. Provide professional development that supports alignment between curricula, prepares students to be globally competitive, and supports integration with work based learning opportunities. (SOURCE: State Board of Education Plan)

ACT. STEP 4.C.ii. Partner with business, industry and educational partners to prepare students to be Career or College Ready by including business in curriculum development, pathways implementation, and work-based learning. (SOURCE: State Board of Education Plan)

GOAL #5: Improve career awareness and mapping.

OBJ 5.A. Coordinate services and information that address career awareness and encourage career pathways in both current and emerging careers.

(SOURCE: NCWorks Comm. Strategic Plan)

OUTCOME: Uniform career awareness and mapping information and services developed and implemented on the state and local levels to increase enrollment in high-demand sectors.

ACT. STEP 5.A.i. Establish a baseline asset map of current career awareness and mapping information and services.

ACT. STEP 5.A.ii. Develop a plan to target resources across the workforce development spectrum to support the development and dissemination of career and college awareness and pathway information to students, parents, adult learners and workforce professionals. (Share via multiple channels, e.g., Career and College Promise, an expansion of NCWorks Online and other state and local communications/outreach channels.)

(SOURCES: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan, BEST NC Proposed NC Education Vision)

ACT. STEP 5.A.iii. Develop consistent, timely information on careers and pathways to success, factoring in information from economic development, research and business.

(SOURCE: NCWorks Comm. Strategic Plan, NCCCS)

ACT. STEP 5.A.iv. Ensure the delivery of consistent information and uniform branding related to career awareness information by developing templates for use on the local level.

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OBJ 5.B. Provide timely academic and career information and engage in intrusive, “early warning” advising via individualized career coaching that allows students to prepare for success in quality careers with the opportunity for continuous learning and skill improvement.

OUTCOME: Increase the number of career coaches and track the success of coaches by measuring the retention, success and employment rates of the students who receive coaching.

ACT. STEP 5.B.i. Work with education and workforce partners to identify resources to support career coaching, beginning in middle school. (SOURCE: State Board of Education Plan)

ACT. STEP 5.B.ii. Identify and communicate best practices in career coaching at each level of the educational pathway, beginning in middle school.

ACT. STEP 5.B.iii. Ensure that both interest and aptitude are assessed as part of the career mapping and pathway models.

GOAL #6: Increase opportunities for college access while keeping education and training affordable.

OBJ 6.A. Establish and strengthen policies and practices that provide increased opportunities for students and adult learners to enter into and proceed successfully through career pathways leading to a post-secondary credential and into a quality career. (SOURCE: NC Chamber Plan)

OUTCOME: Increase the number of students in career pathways, shorten their time to completion/success/credential and employment; decrease student debt.

ACT. STEP 6.A.i. Promote Career and College Promise to give high school students a jump start on higher education and possible reduction in time/cost at higher education institutions.

ACT. STEP 6.A.ii. Expand 12th-grade and summer “bridge” programs.

ACT. STEP 6.A.iii. Identify and implement various strategies to reduce the percentage of students needing remediation in post-secondary education.

ACT. STEP 6.A.iv. Incent community colleges to promote movement of students from training programs into degree programs, e.g., via articulation of continuing education to curriculum, and articulation of credit for prior experience/learning.

ACT. STEP 6.A.v. Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of career pathways by obtaining and providing data/information at agreed-upon points along the pathway, including feedback from employers on employee-readiness and from higher education on student readiness.

ACT. STEP 6.A.vi. Track and compare student debt for the general student population vs. those in programs designed to accelerate education/training and save students money.

OBJ 6.B. Address the unique needs of current and prospective students to help them succeed in education and careers.

OUTCOME: Improved enrollment, completion and retention rates.

ACT. STEP 6.B.i. Provide timely academic and career information and engaging in intrusive, “early warning” advising via individualized career coaching that allows students to prepare for success in quality careers with the opportunity for continuous learning and skill improvement.

ACT. STEP 6.B.ii. Ensure course design and delivery models -- including use of appropriate technology, course length and course offerings and scheduling -- fit student and employer needs.

ACT. STEP 6.B.iii. Re-enroll students who have completed some college but have not earned a credential with an emphasis on those in identified critical careers/career clusters.

OBJ 6.C. Improve and expand education and training opportunities for veterans and for currently serving military personnel. (SOURCE: UNC Plan 2013-18)

OUTCOME: Increase the number and the success rate (i.e., credentials, employment) of veterans in education and training programs.

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ACT. STEP 6.C.i. Expand flexible course delivery options, connect college credit to military experience, and increase academic and career coaching with a focus on military and veteran populations.

(SOURCE: UNC Plan 2013-18)

OBJ. 6.D. Work with education and workforce partners to improve the accessibility and affordability of training and education.

OUTCOME: Net education and training costs to students are reduced; college and training enrollment increases, overall and for hard-to-reach populations such as first-generation college students, veterans, youth, and adults with low literacy skills, disabilities or facing life challenges.

ACT. STEP 6.D.i. Undertake a policy analysis to identify barriers to access, including but not limited to education costs, wrap-around costs (transportation, books, testing and credentialing, child care, etc.), and work in collaboration with workforce, education and nonprofit partners to mitigate those barriers.

ACT. STEP 6.D.ii. Track state and federal program changes that could impact education and training affordability and ensure that support through WIOA programs is connected with community college financial aid resources.

OBJ 6.E. Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of career pathways. (SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan)

OUTCOME: Agreed-upon assessment and evaluation metrics developed and used by workforce and education partners on the state and local levels.

ACT. STEP 6.E.i. Obtain and provide data/information at agreed-upon points along the pathway, including feedback from employers on employee readiness and from higher education on student readiness.

GOAL #7: Promote demand-driven and data-informed decision making and evaluation to more effectively meet workforce customer needs and enhance system accountability.

OBJ 7.A. Use input from the business community and analysis of data to make informed decisions and build a globally competitive workforce. (SOURCE: NC Jobs Plan)

OUTCOME: Education/training and other workforce services prepare individuals with the knowledge and skills for high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand jobs and careers.

ACT. STEP 7.A.i. Work with partners to develop a coordinated approach of identifying targeted career clusters and other definitions of demonstrated economic/workforce need.

(SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan)

ACT. STEP 7.A.ii. Work with partners to develop supply and demand analyses and identify skills gaps to help meet business talent pipeline needs.

ACT. STEP 7.A.iii Evaluate credential attainment goals to ensure appropriate alignment to economic needs. {Industry-recognized credentials and degrees} (SOURCE: UNC Plan 2013-18)

ACT. STEP 7.A.iv. Work with partners to use information from employers, research on short- and long-term/projected economic needs, and research on career pathways to establish needed classes and programs in high schools, community colleges, universities and workforce programs.

(SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan, Jobs Plan)

ACT. STEP 7.A.v. Establish protocols and research tools for periodic reassessment of workforce needs to ensure that educational and workforce programming stays current and reflects changes in career fields and technology.

(SOURCE: State Board of Education Plan)

OBJ 7.B. Integrate and use education and workforce data to inform policy, track progress and measure success.

(SOURCE: NGA Policy Academy proposal)

OUTCOME: Education and workforce data that is accessible and used systematically to assess and improve services for customers.

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- ACT. STEP 7.B.i. Target resources toward helping individuals gain the skills, credentials and experience for in-demand occupations. (SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan, Jobs Plan)
- ACT. STEP 7.B.ii. Add metrics based on consistently collected feedback from customers to strengthen the workforce development system. (SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan)
- ACT. STEP 7.B.iii. Pilot data sharing between third-party industry certification providers and NC workforce development partners in order to determine the value of certifications to industry and students. (SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan)
- ACT. STEP 7.B.iv. Establish processes for education/workforce partners to access analysis of the employment and wage outcomes of their programs.

OBJ 7.C. Help customers access clear and consistent data to make good decisions.

(SOURCE: NCWorks data concept, aimed at customers)

OUTCOME: Data and information made easily available to customers and offering a consistent picture of careers and the labor market.

- ACT. STEP 7.Ci. In the short-term, work with partners to identify and use a set of aligned, vetted career information for career guidance and counseling that provides students, job-seekers and others with consistent information.
- ACT. STEP 7.C.ii. In the longer-term, work with partners to develop a single portal for career information. (SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan)
- ACT. STEP 7.Ciii. Promote consistent career information through professional development for guidance/career counselors, workforce development career development facilitators, and others.
- ACT. STEP 7.C.iv. Make labor market information more readily available to employers, online and via unified business service teams.

GOAL #8: Strengthen the foundations of success for workforce development.

(SOURCE: NCWorks Strategic Action Plan)

OBJ 8.A. Ensure that North Carolina has the nation's most talented, collaborative professionals to support workforce development.

OUTCOME: Top-rate professional development and human resource management that reinforce teamwork and raise the bar for the field

- ACT. STEP 8.A.i. Drawing on research, best practices and collaborative protocols, offer joint training to educators/workforce professionals on business engagement, aligning instruction to economic needs, career awareness, and other Align4NCWorks themes.
- ACT. STEP 8.A.ii. Increase industry-driven training of educators/workforce professionals.
- ACT. STEP 8.A.iii. Develop and implement strategies to recruit, retain and groom effective, collaborative leaders and team members at community colleges and throughout the workforce system.
- ACT. STEP 8.A.iv. Promote credentialing and career ladders within the education/workforce development field.
- ACT. STEP 8.A.v. Use performance management tools and awards to reward community college and other workforce professionals that collaborate effectively and promote NCWorks principles.

OBJ. 8.B. Develop the organizational tools, structures and cross-agency protocols needed to implement Align4NCWorks and support the vision of NCWorks.

OUTCOME: Best practices, interagency agreements, workforce development protocols, system-wide communications, and collaborative planning and grants.

- ACT. STEP 8.B.i. With top-level partner support and in consultation with staff of similar strategic planning efforts, establish Align4NCWorks committees and project management protocols to ensure aligned follow-through on strategic plans.
- ACT. STEP 8.B.ii. Collect, research and regularly update NC collaborative workforce development best practices to support scaling up of innovation.

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ACT. STEP 8.B.iii. Use interagency work groups and interagency agreements to clarify organizational roles and ensure effective service delivery.

ACT. STEP 8.B.iv. Develop and encourage local adoption of protocols for workforce functions that involve multiple partners, require clarified roles, or require consistency across the state.

ACT. STEP 8.B.v. Establish a cross-agency, multi-level team to enhance communications about workforce development for state partners, community colleges, other local partners and workforce development "allies."

ACT. STEP 8.B.vi. Actively participate in WIOA unified planning and other collaborative planning opportunities, and work with partners to pursue grant opportunities to support the NCWorks/Align4NCWorks vision.

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