

Request for Proposals

Catalyzing Career and Technical Education Through Enhanced Career Pathways Incentive Funding Competition

NC Department of Public Instruction,
NC Community College System,
NC Department of Commerce

Date Released: April 7, 2017

Deadline for Proposals: June 2, 2017

All proposals should be submitted to:

joanne.honeycutt@dpi.nc.gov

Introduction and Legislative References

North Carolina workforce development partners have been collaborating for many years to develop and scale high quality career pathways. Career pathways are an extension and enhancement to the CTE Programs of Study reference in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins Act). Many workforce partners participated in similar collaboration under College Tech Prep grants and initiatives as well as local initiatives.

In 2012, NC selected two regions to pilot implementation of regional pathways following the model set forth by Jobs for the Future (JFF) based on the Pathways to Prosperity principles. In 2013, the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) awarded small grants to each Local Education Agency (LEA) to begin the process of developing Career Pathways. In 2014, the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) in collaboration with DPI and the NC Department of Commerce (Commerce) released a two-year competitive proposal to set up Career Pathways between high schools and community colleges. Twenty colleges were funded in partnership with high schools and workforce boards. In 2015, the NC Works Commission assumed a leadership role in supporting career pathways as a statewide framework by which workforce partners could organize. The Commission adopted [criteria](#) for high quality career pathways and established a process to certify pathways throughout the state.

In 2015, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) began work on a Career Readiness Initiative sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Two of the objectives of the CCSSO initiative are focused on career pathways: creating high quality pathways and scaling pathways for ALL students. These objectives supported DPI's existing focus on pathways including the requirement that every LEA develop at least three pathways. In 2016 NCCCS placed increased emphasis on pathways requiring all colleges to submit curriculum outlines for three career pathways between high school and community colleges, further encouraging the collaboration between high schools and community colleges and building on the statewide High School to Community College Articulation Agreement and Career and College Promise program.

To support development of career pathways, several professional development opportunities have been offered to workforce partners, and state staff have provided technical assistance in a variety of ways. Sessions at existing partner conferences have focused on development of pathways, and a Career Pathways conference was offered to local teams to support development. Currently, fourteen regional pathways have been certified by the NC Works Commission, community colleges have submitted frameworks for over 170 grades 9-14 CTE Programs of Study, and school systems have reported over 330 grades 9-14 pathways in a variety of program area and disciplines.

This RFP is to enhance current CTE Pathways or CTE 9-14 Pathway Frameworks. Building on the eight approved elements:

- demand-driven and data-informed paths,
- employer engagement,
- collaboration,
- articulation and coordination,
- work-based learning,
- multiple entry and exit points including industry-recognized credentials,
- career awareness and comprehensive career advising and support services, and

- methods of evaluating pathway success.

While each local partnership is expected to express the metrics they will use to monitor the success of the pathway, little effort has focused on the pathway outcomes to date. Given the number of years into the process and the efforts to assist in the development of the pathways, the workforce partners sponsoring this RFP believe it is appropriate to begin to show positive outcomes from the pathway implementation. High school and community college partnerships are stressed throughout the Perkins Act. There are many strong examples of 9-14 pathway frameworks in place. The purpose of this competitive program is to reward those local partnerships, that through successful implementation of their pathways, have experienced positive outcomes for their region and to begin to hold up viable examples of measurement for statewide replication.

The goal of this RFP is to catalyze pathway implementation and increase positive outcomes for individuals and employers through increased investment in promising pathway implementation practices. Funds awarded through this process will be reinvested and leveraged with existing resources to enhance current systems. Funds should be targeted at activities directly aligned to pathway outcomes; not to the process of developing the pathway.

The Perkins Act allows the state to sanction and incentivize based on performance. Following is an excerpt from the legislation that details the performance that may be considered for incentive funding.

Sec (124)(c) (10)

“(A) for exemplary performance in carrying out programs under this Act, which awards shall be based on—

“(i) eligible recipients exceeding the local adjusted levels of performance established under section 113(b) in a manner that reflects sustained or significant improvement;

“(ii) eligible recipients effectively developing connections between secondary education and postsecondary education and training;

“(iii) the adoption and integration of coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and technical coursework;

“(iv) eligible recipients’ progress in having special populations who participate in career and technical education programs meet local adjusted levels of performance; or

“(v) other factors relating to the performance of eligible recipients under this Act as the eligible agency determines are appropriate;”

As state agencies responsible for the oversight of The Perkins Act, DPI and the NCCCS have agreed to allocate Reserve Funds for this purpose. Up to \$1.2 million will be distributed to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and up to \$600,000 to Community Colleges. Individual grants to LEAs will be awarded in amounts not to exceed \$50,000 and to colleges in amounts not to exceed \$25,000.

Proposals must be submitted by **June 2, 2017**, and recipients will be notified no later than July 7, 2017. Funds awarded should be expended within fiscal year 2017-18 (fully expended by June 30, 2018).

Timeline

Release of RFP	April 7, 2017
Webinar for Prospective Applicants	April 21, 2017, 2:00 pm
Deadline to Submit Questions	May 15, 2017
Deadline to Submit Applications	June 2, 2017
Selections Announced	July 7, 2017

About Incentive Grants

The purpose of this grant program is to reward partnerships that are successfully implementing career pathways and can provide data that support positive outcomes from that implementation. These grants are not for developing career pathway programs.

Applicants should put forth proposals that reflect the criteria approved by the NC Works Commission:

- Demand-driven and data-informed
- Engaged employers
- Collaborative 9-14 Secondary and Postsecondary partnerships
- Career awareness
- Articulation and coordination
- Work-based learning
- Multiple points of entry and exit
- Evaluation metrics

Narrative in the grant application should provide evidence of the criteria and provide qualitative and quantitative data examples that demonstrate achievement of the intended outcomes. Applicants may use a variety of data sources in preparing the application and should include links to data sources or other methods that will allow data to be verified. Performance outcome measures should be reflective of the evaluation metrics that were part of the original pathway development. Examples may include enrollment data, credentials earned, placement in work-based learning, etc.

The grant application should reflect high levels of collaboration, and partners are expected to collaborate to complete the application and budget.

Budget and Permissible Uses of Funds

Funds awarded through this grant process MUST follow the funding and expenditure rules established for other federally awarded CTE funds including those promulgated under UGG. LEAs will receive allotted funds through PRC 058 and will be responsible for building and submitting budgets using the BAAS system. Community Colleges will be awarded funds through the NCCCS allocation process and will be required to submit an initial budget and quarterly updates.

Funds awarded through this program MUST be reinvested in the career pathway on which the metrics/data and narrative reflect.

Funds may be used for the following costs/activities:

1. Equipment purchases (up to 30% of the grant award) related to the enhancement of the pathway or other metrics;
2. Printing and duplicating;
3. Salaries for licensed staff/faculty directly involved in the pathway outcomes;
4. Professional development expenses including related travel costs;
5. Contracted services.

Applicants must provide a detailed description of the cost estimates along with a narrative that describes how the award will further enhance the pathway outcomes and benefit the career pathway program.

All funds received through this program must be used to supplement existing programs and cannot supplant current funding streams.

Application Materials

All applicants must submit the proposal narrative and supporting appendices as described herein no later than 5:00 pm on June 2, 2017. Applications should be formatted as a single pdf document and submitted via email to joanne.honeycutt@dpi.nc.gov.

Required Application Materials

The required application materials include the proposal narrative and supporting appendices. The narrative must be no longer than 12 pages in length, and applicants are encouraged to use the following guidelines relative to each section of the proposal. Text on pages should be at least 11-point font size with margins at least one inch on all sides and double-spaced lines. All pages of the narrative should be numbered and include a footer identifying consortia members.

Appendices A ,B, C, and D are required materials. Applicants may include additional supporting information as appendices such as data elements, news stories, etc. There is no page limit for the appendices.

1. Rationale: 1-2 pages
1.a. Presents a compelling explanation of the intended impact of the proposed activities, including expected numbers of participants to be reached and the quantifiable goals for improvement of pathway outcomes at the secondary and postsecondary level over a defined period of time.
1.b. Describes plans to target and serve a significant number of high-need, underserved or nontraditional participants including postsecondary special populations in the career pathway.
2. Partners and Program: 2 pages
2.a. Demonstrates a strong and consistent track record of collaboration with pathway partners including the development of pathway programs of study, articulation agreements, Career and College Promise programs of study , career advising, work-based learning, etc.

2.b. Cites evidence of high levels of employer engagement in the development of the pathway and in ongoing processes related to continuous improvement of the pathway and related outcomes at both the secondary and postsecondary level.
2.c. Cites conditions at the local or regional level that are supportive of the career pathway implementation including early successes or changes in the economic environment since the pathway was developed.
2.d. Identifies if the career pathway has been certified by the NCWorks Commission or the CTE 9-14 pathway process and how it is aligned with labor-market demand.
3. Performance Outcomes: 3 pages
3.a. Describes the pathway metrics used to evaluate the success of the pathway and/or participants along with the applicant’s experiences for collecting and accessing high-quality data to measure progress and outcomes.
3.b. Provides evidence (qualitative and quantitative) that applicant’s pathway program has a positive impact/change on the individuals served, the community and/or the state based on the metrics proposed during the pathway development such as (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) enrollment data at both the secondary and postsecondary level in the pathway. (ii) data on students transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education in the pathway. (iii) credentials earned that are industry accepted and preferred for employment. (iv) postsecondary credits earned through Dual Enrollment and/or articulation under High School to Community College or Comprehensive Articulation Agreements and awarded at the postsecondary level. (v) coordinated work-based learning experiences at the secondary and postsecondary level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Exploratory: shadowing, mentorship, tours, speakers, etc. b. Experiential: project-based learning, short-term employment, structured observation c. Engaged: long-term placement to enhance technical skills such as internships and apprenticeship experiences (vi) professional development for secondary and postsecondary staff including industry externships (vii) placement of completers in jobs and/or continuing education programs
3.c. Other data that show positive trends for metrics included at the pathway development.
3.d. Describes any adjustment or additions to the original outcome metrics since the pathway was developed.
4. Program Enhancements: 3 pages
4.a. Describes in detail the intended use of awarded funds along with the expected outcome for implementing new strategies.
4.b. Provides a detailed action plan with timeline and responsible parties that reflects the strategies and intended impact as well as the collaborative implementation.
5. Budget: 1 page
5.a. Clearly identifies the uses of grant award funds as an enhancement of and reinvestment into the career pathway
5.b. Demonstrates alignment of the requested funds to the pathway outcomes with detailed explanations of how funds will enhance outcomes.
5.c. Demonstrates collaboration on the planning and use of funds that result in the greatest collective impact.

Appendices	
Appendix A	Budget Template (Applicants MUST use the template provided)
Appendix B	Action Plan (Applicants may use the template provided or choose another format)
Appendix C	Assurances Page (Signed by Partners)
Appendix D	Memorandum of Understanding (Current Pathway or New)

Webinar Registration Information

A webinar detailing the application process is scheduled for April 21, 2017. Interested parties can register using the following information. The webinar will be recorded and available for review at the CTE Directors Moodle site. In addition to sharing information, DPI and college staff will facilitate a question and answer session following the presentation. Questions and answers will be shared on the Moodle site.

Please register for CTE Incentive Grants on Apr 21, 2017 2:00 PM EDT at:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6961347145901118721>

This webinar will present the details related to a RFP for incentive grants based on positive outcomes of career pathways. CTE staff will detail the intent and required components of the application and answer related questions.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be scored on a 100-point scale based on the responses to the following criteria:

<p>1. Rationale: Up to 12 points</p>
<p>1.a. Presents a compelling explanation of the intended impact of the proposed activities, including expected numbers of participants to be reached and the quantifiable goals for improvement of pathway outcomes at the secondary and postsecondary level over a defined period of time.</p>
<p>1.b. Describes plans to target and serve a significant number of high-need, underserved or nontraditional participants including postsecondary special populations in the career pathway.</p>
<p>2. Partners and Program: Up to 20 points</p>
<p>2.a. Demonstrates a strong and consistent track record of collaboration with pathway partners including the development of pathway programs of study, articulation agreements, Career and College Promise programs of study, career advising, work-based learning, etc.</p>
<p>2.b. Cites evidence of high levels of employer engagement in the development of the pathway and in ongoing processes related to continuous improvement of the pathway and related outcomes at both the secondary and postsecondary level.</p>
<p>2.c. Cites conditions at the local or regional level that are supportive of the career pathway implementation including early successes or changes in the economic environment since the pathway was developed.</p>
<p>2.d. Identifies if the career pathway has been certified by the NCWorks Commission or the CTE 9-14 pathway process and how it is aligned with labor-market demand.</p>
<p>3. Performance Outcomes: Up to 25 points</p>
<p>3.a. Describes the pathway metrics used to evaluate the success of the pathway and/or participants along with the applicant's experiences for collecting and accessing high-quality data to measure progress and outcomes.</p>
<p>3.b. Provides evidence (qualitative and quantitative) that applicant's pathway program has a positive impact/change on the individuals served, the community and/or the state based on the metrics proposed during the pathway development such as (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) enrollment data at both the secondary and postsecondary level in the pathway. (ii) data on students transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education in the pathway. (iii) credentials earned that are industry accepted and required for employment. (iv) postsecondary credits earned through Dual Enrollment and/or articulation under High School to Community College or Comprehensive Articulation Agreements and awarded at the postsecondary level. (v) coordinated work-based learning experiences at the secondary and postsecondary level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Exploratory: shadowing, mentorship, tours, speakers, etc. b. Experiential: project-based learning, short-term employment, structured observation c. Engaged: long-term placement to enhance technical skills such as internships and apprenticeship experiences (vi) professional development for secondary and postsecondary staff including industry externships (vii) placement of completers in jobs and/or continuing education programs

3.c. Other data that show positive trends for metrics included at the pathway development.
3.d. Describes any adjustment or additions to the original outcome metrics since the pathway was developed.
4. Program Enhancements: Up to 25 points
4.a. Describes in detail the intended use of awarded funds along with the expected outcome for implementing new strategies.
4.b. Provides a detailed action plan with timeline and responsible parties that reflects the strategies and intended impact as well as the collaborative implementation.
5. Budget: Up to 18 points
5.a. Clearly identifies the uses of grant award funds as an enhancement of and reinvestment into the career pathway
5.b. Demonstrates alignment of the requested funds to the pathway outcomes with detailed explanations of how funds will enhance outcomes.
5.c. Demonstrates collaboration on the planning and use of funds that result in the greatest collective impact.

Submission of Questions/Inquiries

Applicants may also submit questions via [google form \(http://bit.ly/2l06tJR\)](http://bit.ly/2l06tJR). Questions must be submitted by May 15, 2017. Responses to all questions received will be posted with other grant resources on the CTE Director Moodle.

Definitions

Articulation Agreement - a state-level or locally-developed written commitment between a secondary education institution and postsecondary education institution designed to provide students with a non-duplicative sequence of progressive achievement leading to technical skills proficiency, a credential, a certificate or a degree, and is often linked to credit transfer agreements between two institutions.

Career Pathways is a workforce development strategy to support students and workers transitions from education into the workforce. Career pathways are an integrated collection of programs and services intended to develop students core academic, technical, and employability skills; provide them with continuous education and training; and place them in high-demand, high-opportunity jobs. Career pathway initiatives consist of a partnership among community colleges, primary and secondary schools, workforce and economic development agencies, employers, and social service providers.

Pathway Program is a program of interconnected academic and elective classes revolving around a career or subject theme and aligned to a regional labor market need. It is integrated with experiential learning and close connections between secondary and postsecondary education, training, and apprenticeship. The program is designed to support the development of career and life readiness for the learner, so that the individual can successfully enter and advance in their career.

Budget Template – Appendix A

Budget and spending will follow guidelines outlined in the Perkins Act of 2006 and the Administrator's Handbook on EDGAR, 3rd Edition.

Cost Category	Secondary Grant Amount	Postsecondary Grant Amount	Rationale Supporting Cost
Direct Staffing <i>(e.g., salaries, benefits, etc.)</i>			
Consultants and Contractors			
Travel and Registrations			
Equipment			
Printing & Duplicating			
Other Program Costs <i>(specify _____)</i>			
Other Program Costs <i>(specify _____)</i>			
SUBTOTAL			
GRANT TOTAL <i>(must not exceed \$50,000 for secondary and \$25,000 for postsecondary)</i>			

Action Plan - Appendix B

<u>Strategies/Action Steps to Reach the Goal:</u>		<u>Roles/Responsibilities for Each Strategy/Action Step:</u> <i>(Be sure to note roles for K12, Business/Industry, and Community College)</i>		<u>Timeline:</u>
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
Will this require local secondary or postsecondary Board action?		Will this require process changes?		Can other programs be leveraged?
<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Description:		Description:		Description:

Implementation Planning		
<i>What <u>assets</u> can be leveraged to help your team get this work done?</i>	<i>What <u>barriers</u> should you anticipate as you implement these strategies?</i>	<i>What <u>unintended consequences</u> might be created with these strategies?</i>

Key Milestones: What progress markers will you expect to reach throughout CRI on a monthly basis?	
August	September
October	November
December	January
February	March
April	May
June	July

Appendix C

General Assurances Page

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

We agree to comply with the following:

- To provide the appropriate administrative supervision and support necessary to foster success of the project.
- To operate under a written articulation agreement as is attached to this grant application.
- To work cooperatively with the North Carolina Community College System, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions, North Carolina Economic Development, in monitoring and evaluating the program and to submit evaluation data as required.
- To supplement, expand, and not supplant funding for existing programs, activities, or services.
- To demonstrate commitment to the project by providing appropriate time and personnel to complete the objectives and outcomes of the project and all overhead costs, classrooms, and laboratory costs.
- To ascertain that members of the consortium are in compliance with applicable federal and state laws to promote equal opportunity for all participants without regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, political affiliation, or national origin.
- To provide programs, services, and activities that conform to the applicable standards of performance and measures of effectiveness required of academic and technical education programs in North Carolina.
- To attest that all funds will be used to support the cost of only those activities described in the proposal and approved by the State Board of Education, State Board of Community Colleges, The North Carolina Workforce Commission.
- To establish such fiscal control and accounting procedures as may be necessary for proper disbursement of and accounting for all project funds.
- To ensure funds awarded through this program will be reinvested in the career pathway on which the metrics/data and narrative reflect.

Community College President(s) Signature(s)

Date

Superintendent(s) Signature(s)

Date

Appendix D

Consortia Members

Memorandum of Understanding between Community College, LEA(s), and Workforce Development(s) Board outlining the general partner roles, intent to cooperate, and support in building this pathway can be submitted two months after the awarding of the grant. Initial letters of cooperation and support are encouraged in the initial proposal.