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Anson and Union Counties Among 15 Community Collaboratives Selected for myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives launched by ncIMPACT Initiative

The UNC School of Government's ncIMPACT Initiative announces the selection of 15 community collaboratives to an inaugural cohort working to better align their education systems with the needs of their regional economy, in partnership with myFutureNC. This intensive two-year project will position the cohort to significantly increase the number of individuals with postsecondary degrees, credentials, or certificates of value in the workforce. It aligns with the state's legislative goal of 2 million individuals between the ages of 25-44 who possess a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by 2030. Funding was provided by the John M. Belk Endowment, Dogwood Health Trust and UNC Rural.

Wingate University (WU), a comprehensive, independent, and growing university with campuses in Wingate, Charlotte, and Hendersonville, North Carolina, is among the 15 chosen collaboratives. Aligned with their goal of making a difference in the classroom and in the community through developing students' knowledge and skills in focused areas, WU will work very closely with Anson County, Union County, South Piedmont Community College, Union County Public Schools, Monroe-Union County Economic Development, and the Town of Wadesboro.

"These collaboratives offer an organized way to respond to future work challenges that no single institution or even an entire sector can effectively tackle," said Anita Brown-Graham, professor and director of the ncIMPACT Initiative. "We are eager to begin this important work together."

Each team, or "*collaborative*," may cover an individual county, a municipal-county partnership, or a multi-county region. The 15 selected collaboratives are led by the organizations identified below and serve the counties listed:

- Cape Fear Workforce Development Board (Brunswick, Columbus, Pender, New Hanover);
- Central Carolina Community College (Chatham, Harnett, Lee);
- Central Piedmont Community College (Mecklenburg);
- Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board (Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico, Wayne);
- Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro (Guilford);
- HIGHTS, INC (Jackson, Macon, Swain);
- Land of Sky Regional Council (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Transylvania);
- Made in Durham (Durham);
- McDowell County Schools (McDowell);

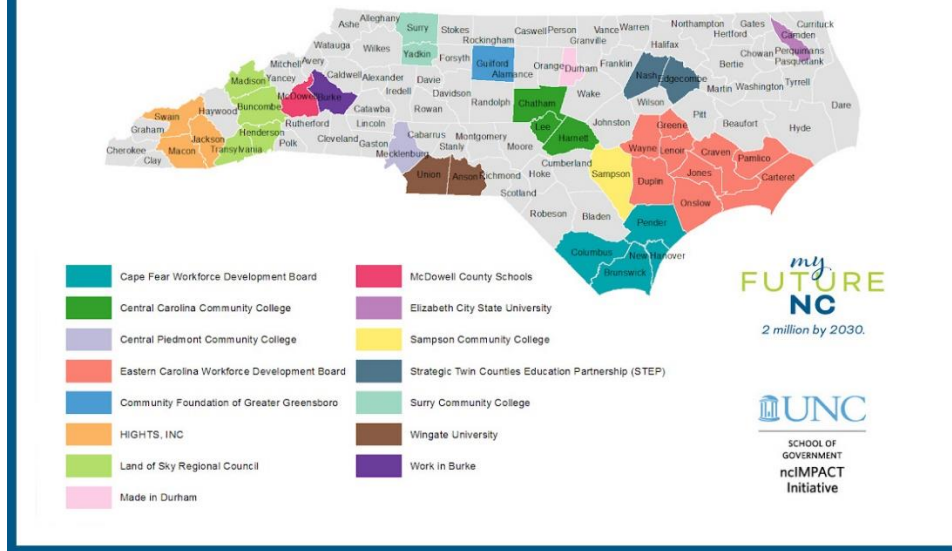
- Elizabeth City State University (Pasquotank);
- Sampson Community College (Sampson);
- Strategic Twin Counties Education Partnership (STEP) (Edgecombe, Nash);
- Surry Community College (Surry, Yadkin);
- Wingate University (Anson, Union); and
- Work in Burke (Burke).

Each participating community will benefit from: Five regional forums at which teams will establish goals, identify strategies, set plans for implementation, collaborate across sectors, and learn from experts; technical assistance support throughout the process; \$15,000 to assist with the costs of hiring a community project manager; \$10,000 in implementation funding for the project; evidence-based resources that respond to immediate learning loss concerns and prepare for longer-term planning; and a Local Attainment Collaborative Toolkit to implement and sustain demand-informed local collaboration with regional employers. The myFutureNC field-based regional impact managers will serve these collaboratives in partnership with ncIMPACT, as well as other communities across the state so they are positioned to join a future cohort of collaboratives.

"Building a strong talent pipeline will require a new level of cross-sector coordination. Among others, key strategic partners in these collaboratives must include PreK-12, universities, community colleges, workforce development boards, economic developers, chambers of commerce, county commissioners, policymakers, and civic leaders. And most critical to the overall success is ensuring decisions are being made based on data and research, and the voice of communities, businesses, industries, and employers is in the center of these important conversations," said Cecilia Holden, president of myFutureNC.

Forty-six project applications were received, representing 82 counties across the state. The selection committee sought to deliver a cohort with regional, economic, and demographic diversity; demonstrated community commitment; prior experience with educational attainment efforts; and identified barriers to educational attainment in the community. The ncIMPACT Initiative will manage this first cohort of collaboratives. myFutureNC will leverage the model developed through this cohort to identify and support additional collaboratives moving forward. Communities interested in updates and resources offered during this two-year project may visit: <http://bit.ly/LEAC-project>.

Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives



The nclIMPACT Initiative (nclIMPACT) is a statewide initiative launched by the UNC School of Government in 2017 to help local communities use data and evidence to improve conditions and inform decision making. Visit nclimpact.org.

myFutureNC is a statewide nonprofit focused on educational attainment that includes some of North Carolina's most influential education, business, and civic leaders. The organization was formed with the goal to create a stronger, more competitive North Carolina. myFutureNC is working across sectors and in communities throughout the state to close gaps in the education pathway, to promote alignment between educational programming and business/industry needs, and to ultimately improve educational opportunities for all North Carolinians. Visit myfuturenc.org.

The John M. Belk Endowment is a private family foundation committed to transforming postsecondary educational opportunities to meet North Carolina's evolving workforce needs. Its mission is aligned with the vision of its founder, the late John M. Belk, who served four terms of mayor of Charlotte and was CEO of the department store company Belk, Inc. Now led by Mr. Belk's daughter, MC Belk Pilon, the John M. Belk Endowment continues to partner with innovative, results-oriented programs in North Carolina to further Mr. Belk's values, legacy, and focus on the value of education as a means to personal fulfillment and community vitality. For more information, please visit <http://jmbendowment.org>.

Dogwood Health Trust is a private foundation based in Asheville, North Carolina with the sole purpose of dramatically improving the health and well-being of all people and communities of 18 counties and the Qualla Boundary in Western North Carolina. Dogwood Health Trust was created from the net proceeds of the sale of Mission Hospital System and focuses on innovative and equitable ways to address the many factors that contribute to overall health and wellness, with a focus on housing, education, economic opportunity, and access to care and health resources. Dogwood Health Trust works to create a Western North Carolina where every generation can live, learn, earn, and thrive, with dignity and opportunity for all, no exceptions. To learn more, please visit www.dht.org.

The Provost's Office at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill established UNC Rural in 2019 to help align, promote, and support partnerships between the university and rural communities across North Carolina. UNC Rural offers a coordinated and collaborative space for resources, discussion, and connection to inform, share, highlight and connect around rural engagement partnerships that benefit communities. Visit go.unc.edu/UNCRural to learn more.

Founded in 1896, Wingate University is a laboratory of difference-making that serves more than 3,600 students in North Carolina. Wingate offers 36 undergraduate majors as well as six master's and four doctoral programs. The University is home to the Cannon College of Arts and Sciences; the Levine College of Health Sciences; the Byrum School of Business; and the College of Professional Studies, which includes the Thayer School of Education and the School of Sport Sciences. Wingate is the leading healthcare education provider in western North Carolina, and nearly one in five Wingate undergraduate students is preparing to be a pharmacist, physician assistant, physical therapist, occupational therapist or nurse. Athletes on Wingate's 23 teams compete in NCAA Division II and have brought home the SAC Echols Athletic Excellence Award for 13 years straight. The University's motto is "Faith, Knowledge, Service." To learn more, visit www.wingate.edu.