

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Allocation for NC Career Coach Program
FY 2025-26, 2026-27, 2027-28

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges is requested to approve allocations of \$5,655,277 per year of state appropriation and \$327,740 for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) funds. These allocations will be for the last three fiscal years of our five-year grant cycle for salary, benefits, professional development, and advising support of Career Coaches recommended by the established NC Career Coach Advisory Committee.

Strategic Plan Reference:

Goal 2 Enrollment: Streamline and strengthen the pathways to community colleges and careers.
Strategy 2.3.2: Expand the use of Career Coaches to include the remaining North Carolina community colleges.

Background: The purpose of the NC Career Coach Program is to place community college career coaches in high schools to assist students with determining career goals and identifying community college programs that will enable students to achieve these goals.

The General Assembly appropriated funds to the NC Community College System for the implementation of the NC Career Coach program. The board of trustees of a community college and a local board of education of a local education agency (LEA) within the service area of the community college jointly apply for available funds for the NC Career Coach Program funding from the State Board of Community Colleges (See Table 1).

Effective July 1, 2019, Senate Bill 61 (Section 3.3) adjusted the matching formula (G.S. 115D-21.5(c)(2)b) based on county tiers. Table 1 indicates the county tier ranking for each program based on the LEA county in which the coach will be serving.

In 2020, through a partnership with the University of North Carolina System Office and the GEAR UP grant, NCCCS received funding for four career coach positions. These coaches were placed at Beaufort County Community College, College of The Albemarle, South Piedmont Community College, and Southwestern Community College.

Due to the success of the NC Career Coach program, some colleges have chosen to fund coaches through their local funds, and these coaches would be in addition to those represented through this funding allocation.

Rationale: G.S. 115D-21.5 requires that an advisory committee, which shall include representatives from the NC Community College System, the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Commerce, and at least three representatives of the business community, review applications and make recommendations for funding awards to the State Board of Community Colleges.

As the program staff assess the program to broaden the deployment of coaches across the state and maximize the use of funds, the following three improvements were implemented.

- To improve the retention of coaches and decrease lapsed salary, the grant is extended from three years to five years.
- To adapt to local college hiring scales and professional development needs, colleges submitted a budget within set parameters instead of a standard allocation for each award.
- To increase the number of colleges with a grant-funded coach, the selection process was changed to (1) an allocated coach awarded to any college who chose to participate and (2) a competitively selected second coach for any college who wished to apply. (NOTE: Legislatively required matching was maintained: Tier 1 = 0%; Tier 2 = 50%; Tier 3 = 100%.)

System office staff reviewed the forty-five colleges who requested an allocated coach to ensure application criteria were satisfactory. Technical consultations were provided to colleges who needed to improve their request to ensure quality programming.

The advisory committee reviewed and scored the competitive applications submitted by thirty-four college-LEA partnerships, ranked, and recommended the award of a second coach to thirty-three colleges. There was insufficient funding to award the lowest ranked college.

The following criteria was used for technical consultations and application reviews:

- Deployment plan for career coaches and strategy that supports effective outreach.
- Evaluation Plan focusing on the outcome of increased enrollment in, and completion of, career pathways leading to marketable job skills and/or further education.
- Economic Impact documented by local workforce needs, causes of unaddressed pipeline needs, and career coach model connection with potential pipeline with workforce needs.
- Professional Development plan including engagement between high schools, community colleges, and community workforce.

- Communication strategies, at a minimum, with high school students, high school and middle school faculty and staff, parents and guardians, and service area workforce partners.

Table 1: Recommended Allocations

Community College	Region	Tier Ranking & County	# Coaches	FY 2025-2026; FY 2026-2027; FY 2027-2028	GEAR UP 2025-2026 Allocation
Asheville-Buncombe TCC	Western	Tier 2 – Madison	1	\$90,000	
Beaufort County CC	Eastern	Tier 1 – Tyrrell	1	\$95,000	
		Tier 1 – Hyde	1	\$95,000	
		Tier 1 – Washington	1		\$ 81,935
Bladen CC	Eastern	Tier 1 – Bladen	1	\$80,865	
		Tier 1 - Bladen	1	\$80,865	
Blue Ridge CC	Western	Tier 3 – Henderson	1	\$65,457	
		Tier 3 - Transylvania	1	\$65,457	
Brunswick CC	Eastern	Tier 3 – Brunswick	1	\$39,172	
		Tier 3 - Brunswick	1	\$38,088	
Caldwell CC&TI	Western	Tier 1 – Caldwell	1	\$82,076	
		Tier 1 - Caldwell	1	\$82,076	
Cape Fear CC	Eastern	Tier 3 – New Hanover	1	\$42,466	
Carteret CC	Eastern	Tier 3 – Carteret	1	\$43,968	
		Tier 3 - Carteret	1	\$43,968	
Central Carolina CC	Central	Tier 2 – Harnett	1	\$44,000	
		Tier 2 - Lee	1	\$44,625	
Central Piedmont CC	Western	Tier 3 – Mecklenburg	1	\$39,582	
Cleveland CC	Western	Tier 1 – Cleveland	1	\$75,186	
		Tier 1 – Cleveland	1	\$75,186	
College of The Albemarle	Eastern	Tier 1 – Chowan	1	\$84,472	
		Tier 1 - Pasquotank	1	\$ 84,472	
		Tier 1 - Pasquotank			\$ 81,935
Craven CC	Eastern	Tier 2 – Craven	1	\$46,580	
Davidson-Davie CC	Central	Tier 2 – Davie	1	\$63,000	
		Tier 2 – Davidson	1	\$63,000	
Durham TCC	Central	Tier 3 – Orange	1	\$45,545	
Edgecombe CC	Eastern	Tier 1 – Edgecombe	1	\$90,080	
		Tier 1 - Edgecombe	1	\$90,080	
Fayetteville TCC	Central	Tier 1 – Cumberland	1	\$69,906	
		Tier 1 - Cumberland	1	\$69,906	
		Tier 2 – Forsyth	1	\$55,957	

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Forsyth TCC	Central	Tier 2 – Forsyth	1	\$55,957	
Gaston College	Western	Tier 2 – Gaston	1	\$79,428	
		Tier 3 – Lincoln	1	\$68,735	
Halifax CC	Eastern	Tier 1 – Halifax	1	\$92,596	
Haywood CC	Western	Tier 2 – Haywood	1	\$58,667	
		Tier 2 – Haywood	1	\$55,334	
Isothermal CC	Western	Tier 1 – Rutherford	1	\$83,800	
		Tier 2 – Polk	1	\$55,870	
James Sprunt CC	Eastern	Tier 1 – Duplin	1	\$80,226	
		Tier 1 – Duplin	1	\$80,226	
Lenoir CC	Eastern	Tier 1 – Lenoir	1	\$86,205	
		Tier 1 – Greene	1	\$82,104	
Martin CC	Eastern	Tier 1 – Martin	1	\$81,773	
		Tier 1 – Bertie	1	\$81,773	
McDowell TCC	Western	Tier 2 – McDowell	1	\$57,500	
		Tier 2 – McDowell	1	\$57,500	
Mitchell CC	Western	Tier 3 – Iredell	1	\$39,765	
Piedmont CC	Central	Tier 1 – Caswell	1	\$81,000	
		Tier 2 – Person	1	\$81,000	
Pitt CC	Eastern	Tier 2 – Pitt	1	\$50,276	
		Tier 2 – Pitt	1	\$47,634	
Randolph CC	Central	Tier 2 – Randolph	1	\$88,000	
		Tier 2 – Randolph	1	\$88,000	
Richmond CC	Central	Tier 1 – Scotland	1	\$78,792	
		Tier 1 – Richmond	1	\$78,792	
Robeson CC	Central	Tier 1 – Robeson	1	\$94,427	
		Tier 1 – Robeson	1	\$94,427	
Rockingham CC	Central	Tier 1 – Rockingham	1	\$85,000	
		Tier 1 - Rockingham	1	\$85,000	
Rowan-Cabarrus CC	Western	Tier 3 – Cabarrus	1	\$91,189	
		Tier 2 – Rowan	1	\$91,269	
Sampson CC	Eastern	Tier 1 – Sampson	1	\$86,115	
		Tier 1 – Sampson	1	\$86,115	
Sandhills CC	Central	Tier 1 – Hoke	1	\$80,920	
South Piedmont CC	Central	Tier 3 – Union	1	\$46,194	
		Tier 3 – Union	1	\$46,194	
		Tier 1 - Anson	1		\$ 81,935
Southeastern CC	Eastern	Tier 1 – Columbus	1	\$95,000	
		Tier 1 – Columbus	1	\$95,000	
Southwestern CC	Western	Tier 1 – Swain	1	\$71,057	
		Tier 2 - Jackson	1		\$ 81,935

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Tri-County CC	Western	Tier 1 – Cherokee	1	\$61,027	
		Tier 1 – Graham	1	\$62,527	
Wake TCC	Central	Tier 3 – Wake	1	\$43,149	
		Tier 3 – Wake	1	\$43,149	
Wayne CC	Eastern	Tier 1 – Wayne	1	\$93,000	
Western Piedmont CC	Western	Tier 1 – Burke	1	\$74,529	
		Tier 1 – Burke	1	\$74,529	
Wilkes CC	Western	Tier 1 – Wilkes	1	\$95,000	
		Tier 1 – Wilkes	1	\$95,000	
Wilson	Eastern	Tier 1 – Wilson	1	\$88,472	
Total			78	\$5,655,277	

Fund Source and Availability: FY 2025-26, FY 2026-27, and FY 2027-28 allocations are contingent upon availability of State General Fund appropriation. Funding will be adjusted as appropriate for legislative salary and benefits rate increases. GEAR UP funding in the amount of \$ 327,740 is contingent upon availability of federal appropriation.

Contact:

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