

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Workforce Diploma Program Administration
FY 2026–27

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges is requested to approve the authorization of up to \$100,000 of the Workforce Diploma Program as outlined in Session Law 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) Section 6.8.(g) for the North Carolina Community College system to hire a temporary full-time employee to administer the Program during FY 2026–2027.

Strategic Plan Reference: Goal 4: Economic and Workforce Development Provide education, training, and credentials to develop the most competitive and agile workforce in the nation.

Strategy: 4.1

Background: North Carolina faces an ongoing workforce challenge created by a population of adult residents who have not earned a high school diploma or equivalent credential. These individuals often encounter significant barriers to employment, wage growth, career advancement, and participation in high-demand industries. Many adults who left high school before graduation require flexible and personalized educational opportunities that accommodate work, family, and financial responsibilities while also providing clear pathways to employment and industry-recognized credentials.

As of July 2026, there are 50 Adult High School Programs operating at NC community colleges and new and innovated program delivery models are necessary to help meet the challenge of reaching adults who have not earned a high school diploma or equivalent credential. Through Session Law 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257), the General Assembly appropriated \$2,250,000 in nonrecurring funds to establish the Workforce Diploma Program for the 2026–2027 fiscal year with the purpose of assisting eligible students to obtain a high school diploma and develop employability and career and technical skills through qualifying third-party entities.

Rationale: Session Law 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) Section 6.8.(g) authorizes the North Carolina Community College System to “use up to one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to hire one full-time equivalent position to administer the Program.” As the funds are nonrecurring for FY 2026–2027, the North Carolina Community College System plans to hire a temporary employee with the funds to administer the Program.

The authorization for the full-time position for Program administration is necessary to ensure the successful implementation, oversight, and accountability of the Workforce Diploma Program. The Program represents a new statewide initiative that will require the coordination of qualifying third-party providers, development of operational policies and procedures, monitoring of student outcomes, fiscal oversight, performance reporting, and compliance with legislative requirements.

Method of Allocation: Session Law 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) Section 6.8.(g) appropriated \$100,000 to hire one full-time equivalent position to administer the Program for FY 2026–2027.

Fund Source and Allocation Period: Funding is available from FY 2026–27 General Fund appropriation for the Workforce Diploma Program. The allocation period is July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027.

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