

**STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
In-State Tuition Pilot Program Legislative Update
FY2025-26**

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges approve the legislative report for the in-state tuition pilot program at Tri-County Community College (TCCC)

Background: Section 6.13 of S.L. 2023-134 permitted the State Board of Community Colleges to establish an in-state tuition pilot program at Tri-County Community College (TCCC). This program, marketed as “Success Without Borders,” allows TCCC to offer in-state tuition to up to 100 residents from the following Georgia counties bordering North Carolina: Fannin, Rabun, Towns, and Union.

Rationale: The pilot program expires at the end of the 2026-2027 academic year. Beginning September 30, 2024, and annually thereafter for the duration of the pilot program, the SBCC must report the results of the pilot program to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division. The report must include at least the following information:

- Information on out-of-state students who enrolled at the in-State tuition rate, including:
 - The number of students enrolled.
 - The programs that these students chose.
 - Any programs unavailable to these students due to the potential displacement of North Carolina residents.
- Any indicators of increased economic development as a result of this program.
- The number of out-of-state students enrolled who do not qualify for the in-State tuition rate.

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In-State Tuition Pilot Program Legislative Update July 2026

Section 6.13 of S.L. 2023-134 permitted the State Board of Community Colleges to establish an in-state tuition pilot program at Tri-County Community College (TCCC). This program, marketed as “Success Without Borders,” allows TCCC to offer in-state tuition to up to 100 residents per semester from the following Georgia counties bordering North Carolina: Fannin, Rabun, Towns, and Union. The Success Without Borders program is contingent on ensuring that out-of-state students do not displace any North Carolina residents eligible for in-state tuition. The pilot program began in October 2023 and will run until the end of the 2026-2027 academic year. Tri-County Community College resides within a geographic bowl encompassing Western North Carolina, North Georgia, and East Tennessee. Leaving this geographic region requires a commuter to either cross a mountain or pass through a gorge. This geographic isolation has defined a regional economic and workforce market that defies state lines. The terrain map below shows how the North Carolina state line dissects this “regional labor bowl.”

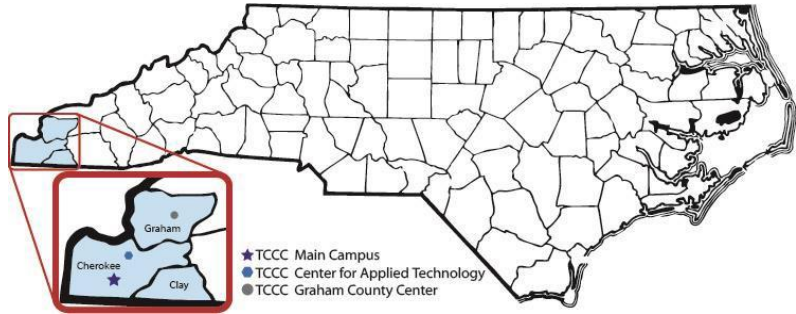


We request at the end of the 2026 – 2027 academic year, the pilot program move to standard operation. The pilot has proven to be successful and truly beneficial to the North Carolina economy and workforce. Over 30 years ago, Georgia saw the benefits of offering NC residents

in Cherokee and Clay counties in-state tuition to Georgia's Higher Education institutions for the benefit of the region. We request the opportunity to continue doing the same. TCCC is the only community college in the NCCCS that borders another state offering students in-state tuition rates.

The number of out-of-state students who were enrolled at the in-state tuition rate to-date with the Pilot Test:

Term	2023 - 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
Fall	-	46	83
Spring	28	59	67
Summer	21	36	46



The academic programs selected by students in the pilot program:

- Accounting and Finance
- Air Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration Technology
- Associate in Arts
- Associate in General Education - Pre-Medical Sonography
- Associate in General Education - Pre-Nursing
- Associate in Science
- Automotive Systems Technology
- Building Construction Technology
- Business Administration
- Cosmetology
- Early Childhood Education
- Electrical Systems Technology
- Emergency Medical Science
- Esthetics Technology (Certificate)
- General Social and Human Services
- Information Technology
- Medical Assisting
- Medical Office Administration
- Medical Sonography
- Nursing
- Public Safety Administration
- Therapeutic Massage
- Welding Technology

A list of any programs unavailable to the pilot program students due to potential displacement of North Carolina Residents:

- No NC Residents were displaced by the out-of-state students in the pilot program.

Any indicators of increased economic development as a result of this pilot program:

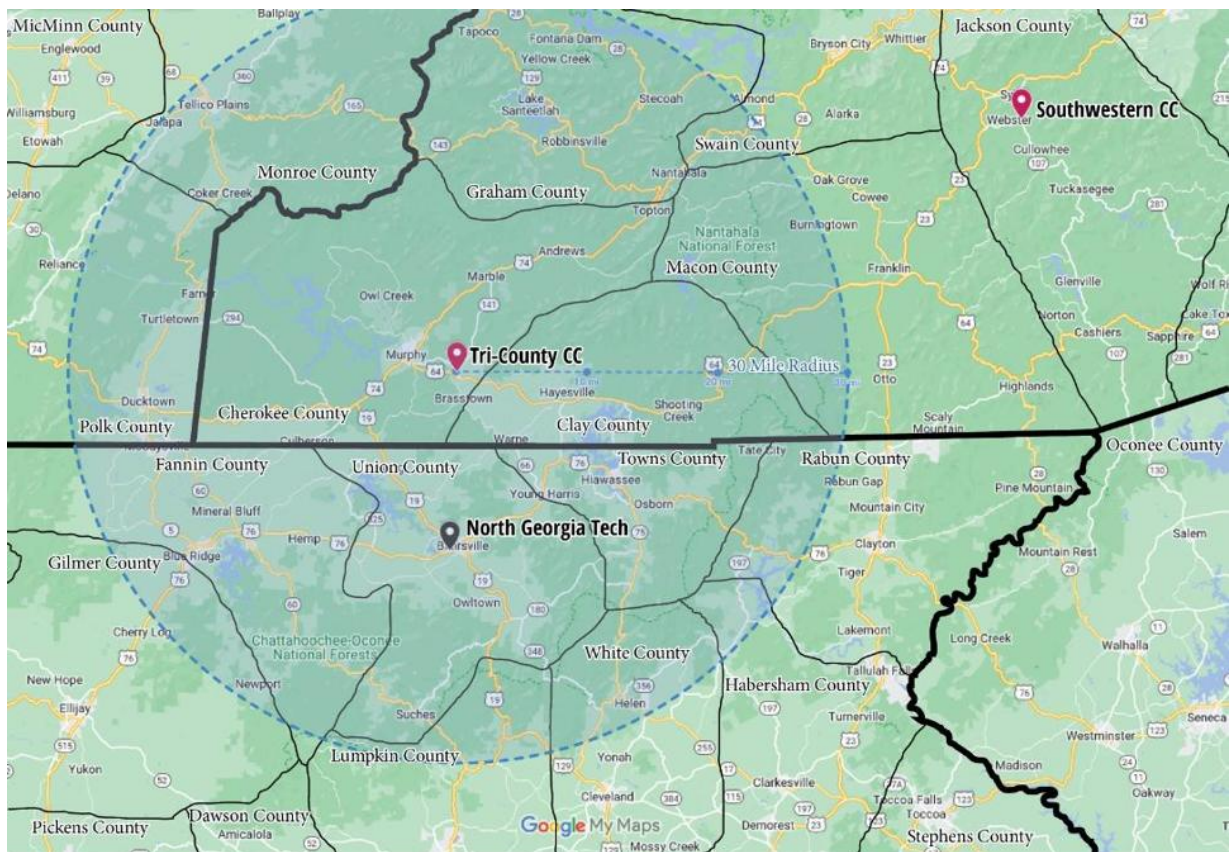
The Success Without Borders pilot program continues to demonstrate positive indicators of regional economic development. Participating students from Georgia contribute to the local economy through expenditures on transportation and goods and services while attending classes at Tri-County Community College. More importantly, upon graduation, these students strengthen the regional workforce by entering high-demand occupations that support

employers throughout western North Carolina. Many students in the pilot program are enrolled in workforce-focused programs that directly address regional labor shortages, including building construction, electrical systems, nursing, medical sonography, and emergency medical services. The pilot program has also strengthened relationships with regional clinical and industry partners by expanding the pipeline of qualified graduates prepared to meet workforce demands in healthcare and skilled trades. As a result, the program is helping address critical workforce shortages while fostering economic growth across the region without displacing North Carolina students.

The number of out-of-state students who do not qualify for the in-State tuition rate:

30 Out-of-State students did not qualify for the pilot program:

1 Alabama	1 Maryland
1 Florida	1 Nebraska
13 Georgia	13 Tennessee



The above map depicts a 30-mile radius around Tri-County Community College's Main Campus. Within this region lies the Blairsville campus for North Georgia Tech, as well as multiple counties within Georgia and Tennessee. Tri-County Community College is closer to North Georgia Tech than its nearest NC Community College Partner, Southwestern Community College.

Best Practices

Our experience with the Success Without Borders pilot program has demonstrated that the North Carolina–Georgia state line does not reflect the economic realities of our region. Residents of the bordering Georgia counties regularly travel into Western North Carolina for

employment, healthcare, commerce, and other essential services, making the region function as a shared labor market rather than separate economies. The out-of-state tuition rate has historically created a significant barrier to education and workforce training for these individuals, limiting both their opportunities for career advancement and employers' access to a skilled workforce. Providing in-state tuition to residents of eligible border counties reduces this barrier, enabling more students to pursue high-demand training while strengthening the workforce pipeline for Western North Carolina businesses. The pilot program demonstrates that expanding educational access for neighboring border communities benefits both individuals seeking economic mobility and the regional employers who rely on a qualified workforce.