

STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
North Carolina Community College System
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Rural Health Transformation Program Memorandum of Agreement
FY 2026-27

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges (SBCC) is requested to approve a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services (DMH/DD/SUS) and the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) to support the development of a statewide behavioral health workforce credential pathway.

Background: Through funding from the North Carolina Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), DMH/DD/SUS is partnering with NCCCS to address behavioral health workforce shortages by developing a standardized, competency-based Qualified Professional (QP) workforce pathway. NCCCS will serve as the statewide Lead Coordinating Entity to support workforce development, improve access to care, and strengthen talent pipelines, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

These graduates bring critical, hands-on skills and practical training that directly align with the responsibilities of qualified professionals so they can serve more people in North Carolina with mental health, IDD, and/or substance use care needs.

Full details about the statewide QP initiative are available here: [Qualified Professional Initiative | NCDHHS](#)

Rationale: This agreement enables NCCCS to lead the development of scalable behavioral health workforce pathways aligned with employer needs and state requirements, helping address critical workforce shortages across North Carolina.

Project Scope: NCCCS will coordinate participating colleges, engage subject matter experts, develop a statewide implementation framework, establish a standardized QP credential model, and support workforce pathway and apprenticeship development. Key deliverables include participation from at least five colleges, development of four workforce pathway models, and support for up to 75 participants in future apprenticeship pathways and/or Workforce Pell-supported programs.

Project Evaluation:

Based on Performance Requirements listed in the MOU, the project shall deliver the following:

1. Number of workforce implementation frameworks submitted to and accepted by DMH/DD/SUS: 1
2. Number of participating community colleges with signed participation commitments

submitted to DMH/DD/SUS: Minimum of 5

3. Number of individuals participating in pilot workforce pathways and pre-apprenticeship activities across participating colleges: 45-75

4. Number of subject matter experts engaged and documented: 8-12

5. Number of standardized QP-aligned credential framework documents developed and submitted to DMH/DD/SUS: 1

6. Number of pre-apprenticeship or workforce pathway models with implementation plans submitted to DMH/DD/SUS: Minimum of 4

7. Number of Workforce Pell alignment planning framework documents developed and submitted to DMH/DD/SUS: 1

Fund Source Availability: Funding is provided through the CMS-funded Rural Health Transformation Program and administered by NCDHHS. The project is funded at 100% federal support with no required match. The total contract amount is \$700,000, with reimbursement tied to completion of project deliverables and reporting requirements. Payment milestones total \$700,000 during FY 2026-27.

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