

State Awards Nearly \$1.5 In Job Training Grants

By Administrator

Tuesday, 12 March 2019 15:01 -

KANNAPOLIS: Six local partnerships across North Carolina have won grants totaling almost \$1.5 million to support efforts to connect people with the skills they need to get good-paying jobs. Governor Roy Cooper made the announcement at the North Carolina Research Campus location of Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, lead partner for one of the innovative programs awarded a grant. The grants come from the NCWorks Local Innovation Fund, which Governor Cooper established last year as part of his NC Job Ready initiative to prepare North Carolina's workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

"Building a job ready North Carolina requires creativity and collaboration among employers, educators, and communities across our state," Governor Cooper said. "These grants will enable innovative partnerships to help workers improve their job skills through opportunities like customized training, apprenticeships and work-based learning so they can be ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow."

Three programs received two-year implementation grants, which are designed to assist communities that already have a collaborative team in place, an innovative idea ready to go, and the local support needed to be successful.

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Pathways to Purpose (Brunswick County): A \$400,000 grant will support a program to train construction and repair workers to fix damage from Hurricane Florence. The project overhauls the traditional approach to delivering instruction, managing retention and awarding workforce credentials in order to keep pace with the demand on the area's construction industry. Partners include Brunswick Community College (project lead), Cape Fear Workforce Development Board, Brunswick Transit System, Countywide Community Development Corporation, Brunswick County Sheriff's Department/Detention Center, Brunswick County Career Center, Waccamaw Volunteer Fire Department and Sunset Beach Fire Department.

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RE-Build your Future (Rowan and Cabarrus counties): A \$400,000 grant will support a project to provide post-secondary training to formerly incarcerated individuals to work in the light construction industry. The program will also develop an employer education campaign to increase the number of "second-chance" employers in the region willing to hire people who have served their time and are ready to work. Partners include Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (project lead), Centralina Workforce Development Board, the NCWorks Career Center in Cabarrus County, the North Carolina Department of Commerce Reentry Initiative, Cooperative Christian Ministries, Rowan Helping Ministries and the Cabarrus County Sheriff's Office.

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WNC Early Childhood Workforce Development Program (Buncombe, Madison, Henderson and Transylvania counties): A \$400,000 grant will expand a program started in Buncombe County to train more early childhood educators. The program will address the shortage of early childhood teachers by recruiting candidates in under-resourced communities and providing them with training, substitute placement and coaching. The program seeks to increase the number of teachers from diverse backgrounds entering the profession and increase the availability of quality child care for working families. Partners include the Buncombe County Partnership for Children, Inc. (project lead), Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, Smart Start of Transylvania County, Children & Family Resource Center of Henderson County, Smart Start Partnership for Children of Henderson County, Madison County Partnership for Children and Families, and Community Action Opportunities, Inc.

Three programs received one-year capacity grants to help build additional ability to strengthen partnerships, identify community needs and resources, and build local support.

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Rural Transportation (Wilkes County): A \$98,013 grant will support the development of an action plan for workforce transportation in the area. Partners include Wilkes Community College (project lead), High Country Workforce Development Board, North Carolina Division of Workforce Solutions, the NCWorks Career Center in Wilkes County, North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Goodwill Industries, Wilkes Economic Development Corporation, Wilkes County Department of Social Services and the North Wilkesboro Housing Authority.

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Region Q Unified Communications Plan (Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin and Pitt counties): A \$100,000 grant will support their efforts to work with both the business community and job seekers. Partners include the Region Q Workforce Development Board (project lead), Mid-East Commission, Beaufort, Bertie, Hertford, Martin and Pitt County governments, Beaufort County Economic Development, Bertie County Economic and Industrial Planning and Development Commission, Martin County Economic Development, Pitt County Development Commission, NCEast Alliance, Beaufort County Community College, Martin Community College, Pitt Community College and Roanoke-Chowan Community College.

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Comprehensive Workforce and Education Data Project (Mecklenburg County): A \$100,000 grant will better use data from multiple sources to understand the region's workforce needs, education and training resources, and challenges. The goals are to identify areas of opportunity, target underserved and under-resourced populations, and develop a plan to increase access to and completion of training. Partners include Central Piedmont Community College (project lead), Charlotte Works, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

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The six grants will be funded by the Division of Workforce Solutions within the NC Department of Commerce. Applications submitted were reviewed by teams of workforce and innovation experts with six out of 34 applications selected to receive funds.

Gov. Cooper's NC Job Readyworkforce initiative is built on three core principles: helping North Carolinians get the skills and education they need to be ready for jobs available now and in the future, using employer leadership to keep training relevant to evolving industry needs, and taking great local innovations and applying them statewide.

The NCWorks Local Innovation Fund supports projects that do one or more of the following: address an underserved community or population currently disconnected from the education and workforce system; bring together diverse community organizations; help workers increase their education and skills; and develop talent pipelines for in-demand, high-wage occupations.

The Local Innovation Fund is an initiative of the NCWorks Commission. The 33-member Commission includes representatives from the business community, heads of state workforce agencies, educators and community leaders. The Commission, which is designated as the state's Workforce Development Board under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, recommends policies and strategies to enable the state's workforce and businesses to compete in the global economy. All members are appointed by the Governor, other than certain members who serve ex-officio.