

## Communities In Schools Gets Job Readiness Grant

By Administrator

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Governor Roy Cooper announced an \$825,000 grant to help high school students prepare for college and careers through Communities In Schools of North Carolina's (CISNC) Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates (JNCG) program. Gov. Cooper made the announcement at Henderson County Innovative High School.

As part of Governor Cooper's NC Job Ready workforce development initiative, the grant allows the JNCG program to work with high school juniors and seniors at seven schools, including the Henderson County Innovative High School, that have piloted the program since 2017. The pilot program was made possible by a \$2 million grant announced by Governor Cooper. Funding for the grant comes from the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

"The Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates program already has helped many students who have faced tough challenges graduate from high school and prepare for a job," Governor Cooper said. "It's more important than ever that we engage employers and workforce development partners to ensure our students graduate with the training and experience they need to succeed."

A student-centered program, JNCG focuses on employability and workplace skills that employers have identified as essential for today's careers. Each student in the program works to master crucial workplace competencies such as communications, teamwork, leadership, critical thinking, and problem solving with the goal of graduating from high school, completing post-secondary education/training, and securing good-paying jobs.

In each participating school, school leaders and JNCG college and career coaches identify students who are at risk of not completing high school or successfully transitioning into training or the labor market because of academic, economic, family and/or personal barriers. Students then work with JNCG coaches, who are trained to prepare students to achieve academic, career and life success, to gain essential workplace competencies that comprise the National High School Employability Curriculum developed by the Jobs for America's Graduates national network. These coaches will continue to serve in the following schools:

- \* Concord High School (Cabarrus County Schools);

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- \* Henderson County Innovative High School (Henderson County Schools);
  
- \* Northwest Halifax Collegiate and Technical Academy (Halifax County Schools);
  
- \* Purnell Swett High School (Robeson County Schools);
  
- \* Wallace-Rose Hill High School (Duplin County Schools);
  
- \* Walter M. Williams High School (Alamance-Burlington School System); and
  
- \* Wilkes Central High School (Wilkes County Schools).

“Watching our first students experience career opportunities in high-end manufacturing, learn teaming skills, and find their entry point into our job market proves that we can close our skills gap in North Carolina,” Pam Hartley, President and CEO of Communities In Schools of North Carolina, said. “Every student has great potential to plug in and be an amazing contributor to our state, we just have to expose them to the prospects available, and, thanks to this grant, we can provide that exposure.”

Since 2017, one cohort of students has completed the full JNCG program (consisting of one year in school and one year of follow-up after graduation), and a second cohort has completed the in-school portion of the program. The two cohorts have a 98 percent high school graduation rate. The program also works directly with employers to expose students to careers in their community and across the state. JNCG staff have developed partnerships with companies such as Honeywell, GE Aviation, Harris Teeter, Duke Energy, and many local businesses who are investing their resources, talent and knowledge to provide experiences for students in the classroom and on-the-job. Activities include career awareness, career exploration and real-world career experience, such as internship opportunities. Coaches also have been partnering with local workforce development boards and community colleges to connect students with available resources. Continuing to strengthen such partnerships will be a focus of

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the program during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates is Communities In Schools of North Carolina's program focused on 11th and 12th-graders who will graduate and move on into the workforce or other post-secondary opportunities. Communities In Schools of North Carolina (CISNC) is a leading partner in providing Integrated Student Supports, or wraparound services, to propel student success in more than 300 schools across the state. Based directly inside schools, specialists connect students and their families to evidence-based services and supports, as well as critical educational and community-based resources, to increase attendance, improve behavior, enhance coursework, and engage more parents and families in student pathway to graduation and beyond. Tailored to each student's specific needs, specialists create personalized toolkits for success and an educational experience where students can learn, thrive and power the future. Learn more at [cisnc.org/jncg/ < https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=38109465&p;msgid=471119&act=E9NM&c=1346310&destination=https%3A%2F%2Fcisnc.org%2Fjncg%2F](https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=38109465&p;msgid=471119&act=E9NM&c=1346310&destination=https%3A%2F%2Fcisnc.org%2Fjncg%2F) > .