myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives launched by ncIMPACT: Building local capacity to achieve the state’s goal of 2 million by 2030

Your community’s talent development potential remains key to your economic competitiveness or disadvantage in today’s economy, whether high-tech or service industries dominate your region. Prior to the pandemic, 67% of jobs in North Carolina required some form of postsecondary attainment. The pandemic accelerated this trend, while decelerating attainment: dropout rates may triple, and first-time community college and university enrollment declined 21%. We must expand our education to career connections to meet the economic realities we face.

The ncIMPACT Initiative at the UNC School of Government (ncIMPACT) and myFutureNC, with funding provided by the John M. Belk Endowment, will offer a two-year pilot program that supports 10 local educational attainment collaboratives across the state that seek to significantly increase the number of students successfully completing post-secondary credentials of value in the workforce: a degree, credential, or certification. This effort aligns with the state’s legislative goal of 2 million individuals between the ages of 25 and 44 who possess a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by 2030. Is your community ready to lead the way for our state?

Communities that want to apply for the program must submit an online application by March 29.
You can use this PDF of the application form to prepare your responses before submitting them online if you wish.

Selected collaboratives will serve as leaders in implementing positive strategies for post-secondary educational attainment in their communities and will pilot practices that benefit communities across the state.

Program Basics
Local communities must apply as teams to participate in this two-year program focused on increasing educational attainment and equity in attainment. Teams will become the inaugural myFutureNC Network of Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives. This network will:

- Have deep local impact by increasing the effectiveness of the local attainment collaboratives and connections among educational systems, employers, local governments, and other stakeholders within the participating communities;
- **Build capacity across the state** by creating collaborative cross-community learning and partnerships, and delivering model policies to inform North Carolina’s broader policy landscape; and
- **Leverage key resources** including federal, state, and philanthropic funding, as well as data tools and metrics to measure collaborative progress toward achieving their goals.

Network collaboratives will also receive these benefits:

- **Valuable resources** that respond to immediate concerns about learning loss during the pandemic and help prepare for longer-term planning;
- **Deep expert and peer support** during five forums at which teams will develop goals, make plans for implementation, and collaborate across sectors;
- **Robust technical assistance** throughout the process;
- **Critical financial support** in the form of $15,000 to compensate a community project manager and $10,000 of implementation funding for their action plan; and a
- **Local Attainment Collaborative Toolkit** to implement and sustain demand-informed local collaboration with regional employers

**Community Selection**
Through an application process a panel of ncIMPACT and myFutureNC representatives will select 10 communities to participate in the two-year program. Communities may apply as individual county teams, a municipal-county partnership, or a multi-county collaborative. Communities will be selected based on the following criteria:

- **Identification** of a core team composed of individuals from different sectors,
- **Demonstration of community commitment** through at least three letters of support,
- **Prior experience** with educational attainment efforts,
- **Barriers** to educational attainment in the community, and
- **Diversity** of geography, economy, and demography.

**Team Formation**
After selection for the program, the core team identified in the application will identify the full community team (local collaborative). The collaborative will include a diverse team of community stakeholders, all committed to active participation in the two-year program. ncIMPACT will assist communities with stakeholder identification to build the collaborative team. Given differences between communities, the composition of the teams will vary.

**Commitments:** Each community collaborative must be prepared to meet monthly over the course of the program to develop and implement a cogent strategy that (1) leverages existing assets and activities, (2) increases the community’s educational attainment by 3%, and (3) improves equity in attainment. A community project manager will support this work (with funding provided by the program) in addition to the technical assistance provided by the partners.

**Contact Us**
Anita Brown-Graham
Professor & Director,
ncIMPACT Initiative
brgraham@sog.unc.edu

Emily Williamson Gangi
Policy Engagement Director,
ncIMPACT Initiative (Project Manager)
emily.gangi@unc.edu
Community Profile

Teams may apply with organizations representing a school district, municipality, county, or multi-county region. Note that in either of these combinations, a school system, higher education institution, local government, and workforce/business partner must be included. Your community team may also include nonprofits, faith-based institutions, additional government agencies, chambers of commerce, early childhood organizations, or other stakeholders as appropriate to your community. We will ask about these team members later in the application.

County(ies), municipalities, and school system(s) covered by your team:

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Among the teams we ultimately select to participate in this significant opportunity, we would like to ensure we have a mix of different types of communities in different regions across the state.

Please describe your community. For example, you could tell us about its demographics; its rural, urban, or suburban character; or its dominant industries. Feel free to include whatever seems important to you.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Please describe why the need for increased educational attainment is important for your community. You may find this resource helpful in making your case. Please use data where available.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
Please describe your community's prior or ongoing experiences with efforts to improve educational attainment, if any. We are interested in examples of earlier collaborative efforts. For example, you could share who collaborated on these efforts, what they accomplished, and/or how your current work builds on these efforts.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

How would your community define success with this project? Feel free to include specific goals or impacts you would like to accomplish.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
Identifying the Core Team

Through the application process, communities must identify a core team of 3-5 key individuals representing different organizations. If your community is selected, this core team will serve as the executive committee for the broader community effort and identify members of the full community team. Please identify your core team below. Remember it should include a school system, higher education institution, local government, and workforce/business partner. (Please include name, organization, and job title for each; there is no need to include contact information at this time.)

Core team member #1* ________________________________________________
Core team member #2* ________________________________________________
Core team member #3* ________________________________________________
Core team member #4  ________________________________________________
Core team member #5  ________________________________________________

Who is the lead organization for your core team?

________________________________________________________________________
Identifying Possible Members of the Full Community Team

As noted earlier, if your community is selected, the core team will then work to identify the full community team. The community team will be a diverse group of key community actors, all committed to active participation in the two-year program. The ncIMPACT Initiative will assist communities with a stakeholder identification exercise to help build the full team. Given that each community has different needs and different key stakeholders, composition of the teams will vary. Among others, community teams may include, but are not limited to, the following individuals:
- Chamber of commerce
- City and county managers
- Community college administrators and faculty
- Early learning providers
- Elected officials
- Employers/business leaders
- Judges and/or magistrates
- Law enforcement officials
- Local economic or workforce board members
- Military representatives
- Nonprofit and faith leaders
- Public library representatives
- School system personnel – superintendents, principals, teachers, etc.
- Social services
- Students
- University administrators and faculty

Please list preliminary partners or key stakeholders that you would consider asking to join your community team if your application is selected. Include name, organization, and job title for each person to the extent they are known. (There is no need to include contact information at this time.)

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
Letters of Support and Point of Contact

Community support will be vital for the success of your community team. Please use the file upload portal below to upload three letters indicating organizational support for participating in this two-year program. Acceptable file formats include PDFs, Word documents, and common image files. If your three letters are saved together in one file, you may upload that file in the first portal below. If they are in three separate files, you must use all three portals (only one file per portal).

*First file upload portal:

Second file upload portal (if needed):

Third file upload portal (if needed):

Finally, please identify a single point of contact who can answer questions about this application.

Name  __________________________________________________
Organization _____________________________________________
Job title  _______________________________________________
Daytime phone number ________________________________
Email address ____________________________________________