

myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives Launched by nclIMPACT Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Eligibility

What level of experience will the ideal applicant have?

We are looking for collaboratives with a range of experience levels, but do not encourage applications from individuals who just began communicating in response to this opportunity and did not collaborate previously. While we expect all collaboratives to have some experience working to improve educational attainment in their communities, there is not an ideal amount of experience.

If your community is just beginning conversations around collaboration and attainment, please reach out to Melissa Caperton, melissa@myfuturenc.org, for support in getting started.

What are the sectors that should be represented on applying teams?

Teams will ideally include representatives from a school system, higher education institution, workforce/business partner, and local government.

Do applicants have to be focused on a specific age range or group?

If the collaborative's goals are aligned with the statewide goal of increasing the attainment of postsecondary credentials of value in the workforce, then it does not matter which age group the collaborative's work targets.

Are communities with limited employment opportunities at a disadvantage in the application process?

We understand that some communities have less diverse employment sectors than others and encourage all communities to apply, regardless of the number of employment sectors in their community.

Is there a preferred or required community mix? For example, would a solely rural location be preferred over a location with a mix of rural and urban?

While we seek to assemble a group of ten collaboratives collectively representative of the state's rural, urban, and suburban communities, at the individual applicant level, there is no preferred community composition.

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Application

Does a local government have to submit the application?

No.

Are school board members eligible to be on a team?

Yes.

Can individuals or institutions serve as team members on two separate applications?

We recognize that some individuals and institutions serve multiple regions and may be sought out as team members by multiple collaboratives applying to the initiative. It is acceptable for the same individual or institution to be a team member on multiple applications. However, they may only serve as the primary point of contact on one application.

What if my community has a lot of prior experience with attainment efforts? Which experiences should we include in response to that question on the application?

While it's ultimately up to the community's discretion, we are most interested in information about the partners involved in those efforts, the goals set, and any outcomes achieved.

Is this for School Districts as a whole or can individual schools collaborate with local community college staff and community business staff to implement?

School-based efforts are encouraged. However, the school district needs to be committed to the collaboratives' work.

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Interview & Selection

What will the interview process be like?

Teams that submit their applications by March 29 will be notified of their application status by April 15. If invited to interview, teams will interview from April 19-30. In May, teams selected will be invited to participate in the inaugural class of the myFutureNC network of local collaboratives.

How will teams be selected?

Teams will be selected based on the strength of their application relative to five core 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
- **Diversity** of geography, economy, and demography

Who will review applications?

Applications will be reviewed by a selection team composed of ncIMPACT Initiative and myFutureNC representatives.

How can my community remain engaged if we're not selected for the network?

myFutureNC and ncIMPACT will continuously share the selected collaboratives' work, including the strategies they pursue, the plans they develop, and the policies they adopt. We hope this work will allow collaboratives across the state both within and outside of the formal collaboratives in the program to engage with and benefit from the program.

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Program

What qualifies as a “post-secondary credential of value in the workforce?”

These credentials include degrees, certifications, and certificates that provide access to living wage employment.

Do industry recognized credentials earned by high school students count toward a community’s attainment?

Yes.

What is required of participating collaboratives?

Participating collaboratives are expected to actively participate in the program convenings, to share promising approaches and expertise with the larger network, and share data measuring the progress of their attainment efforts.

Are there specific barriers collaboratives are expected to focus on solving?

While there may be common barriers across communities, the program does not expect collaboratives to focus on any required barriers in their application. If selected for the program, collaboratives will identify high leverage barriers to address through their work.

Is there a calendar of activities for participating collaboratives?

All dates have not been finalized at this time. However, participating collaboratives should expect to meet monthly in their local community and can expect to participate in five forums from July 2021 to December 2022.

Will the five forums be in person?

Our hope is to hold all five forums in-person. If we are not able to safely meet in-person, we will convene virtually.

How will each collaborative’s educational attainment goals be calculated?

We set a preliminary goal for each community to increase attainment by 3% as soon as possible. Teams selected for this program will engage in goal-setting specific to their communities with assistance from myFutureNC and organizations with data expertise, such as Carolina Demography. In all communities, this growth will represent significant progress towards the 2030 statewide education attainment goal.

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Will the program recommend additional stakeholders to join selected teams?

The program will help teams strategically identify stakeholders who could advance their collaborative's work.

Does the project manager need to be a new position, or can collaboratives dedicate the time of a current employee using these funds?

The individual could be an existing employee of a partner organization, an independent contractor, or some other individual skilled in project management and facilitation.

Does the local collaborative get to select their project manager?

Yes. Each collaborative will hire a community project manager. Participating communities will receive \$15,000 to assist with hiring or funding the community project manager. The individual could be an existing employee of a partner organization, an independent contractor, or some other individual skilled in project management and facilitation.

Ideal community project managers will be:

- Local to the community and familiar with stakeholders and other community leadership;
- Experienced in facilitation and able to provide consultative guidance on the implementation process;
- Able to serve in a project management capacity, scheduling meetings and ensuring tasks are completed on time; and
- Respected and trusted by members of the community team.

Roles. The community project manager will handle a variety of roles, including facilitator, communication coordinator, liaison to nclIMPACT Initiative and myFutureNC, and record keeper.

Responsibilities. Community project managers will work approximately 5-10 hours per week. Their respective work will include:

- Ensuring that action steps are taken to achieve goals developed by the collaborative;
- Convening and facilitating monthly meetings with the community collaborative to support implementation efforts;
- Helping foster collaboration opportunities with the other collaboratives and connecting the local team to state-wide resources and other best practices to advance this important work;
- Participating in monthly community project manager calls with the nclIMPACT Initiative;
- Maintaining records for the community collaborative about progress toward goals; and
- Working with the team to identify performance measures for the team's initiatives and collect data to evaluate those measures over time.

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Funding

If multiple entities, such as school districts join a team, how will that impact funding by the program?

Each collaborative selected will receive \$25,000 of financial support.

If goals are not met at the end of the two years, would the awarded organization be liable?

Each local collaborative will be assisted with setting goals for their community and supported in implementing strategies designed to achieve those goals, as well as monitoring progress toward achievement. Local collaboratives will not be penalized in any way for failure to achieve the goals set for their community.

Can the funds designated for a project manager be used for another purpose?

The role and responsibilities of the project manager – and the suitability of the individual selected to perform that role – are critical to the success of a collaborative's work. The project manager serves as the primary liaison between the local collaborative and the program organizers from the nclIMPACT Initiative and myFutureNC. For these reasons, we would hesitate to approve using the funds for another purpose. However, we would consider a more specific request from a collaborative after the selection process is complete.

Is there flexibility in the funding? Specifically, can it be used towards participant supportive services, like transportation or childcare expenses?

Implementation funds may be used for any strategy designed to help the collaborative achieve its goals.