

# Guilford Jobs 2030

Guilford County

## Collaborative Case Study

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### What is Guilford Jobs 2030?

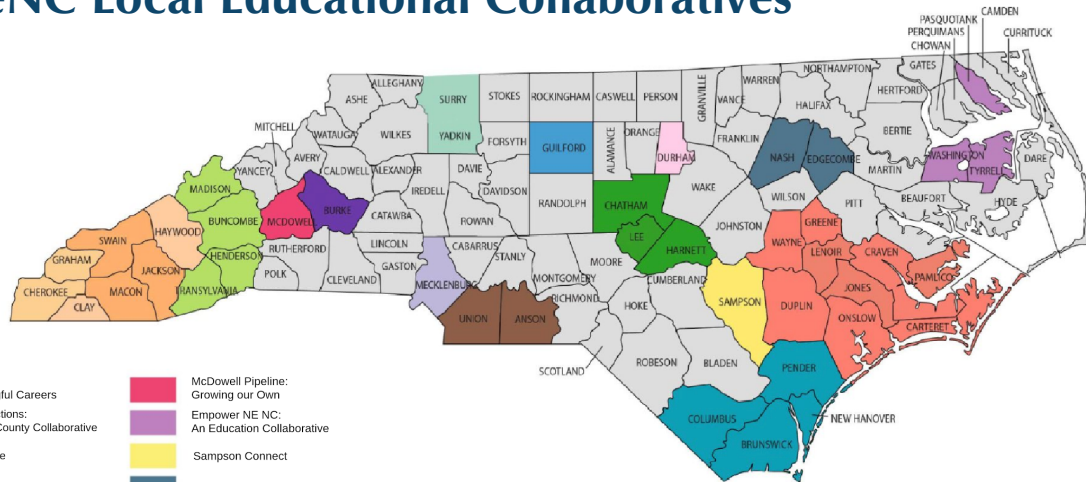
GJ30, or Guilford Jobs 2030, is a myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaborative (LEAC) founded in response to the myFutureNC Commission’s Call to Action for a statewide educational attainment goal of 2 million North Carolinians aged 25-44 with a degree or credential by 2030. By striving to deeply understand the barriers to education for county residents, the collaborative seeks to pilot a hyperlocal education and workforce development model that addresses specific educational attainment issues within individual census tracts in Guilford County.





# Relationships and Connections: Primary Partners

## myFutureNC Local Educational Collaboratives



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|--|---|
| Our Future Cape Fear: A Roadmap to Meaningful Careers                    | McDowell Pipeline: Growing our Own        |
| Central Carolina Connections: Chatham, Harnett, Lee County Collaborative | Empower NE NC: An Education Collaborative |
| Queen City Collaborative   | Sampson Connect                           |
| OurFutureE3NC Educate, Equip, Excel                                      | #workHERE                                 |
| GuilfordJobs2030   | Surry-Yadkin_IMPACT                       |
| AchieveHIGHTS!   | Our Future in UNISON                      |
| Land of Sky Education & Workforce Collaborative                          | Work in Burke                             |
| Durham Opportunity Collaborative   |   |

### GuilfordWorks

Connects constituents with the resources and programs they need to achieve their post-secondary goals. Spearheads hyperlocal efforts to identify community leaders to help with outreach to targeted audiences.

### Reading Connections

Increases adult literacy in Guilford County through programming and community connections.

### Regional Employers

Helping to identify current and future workforce needs.



## Practices and Outcomes

As a LEAC, GJ30 has engaged dozens of stakeholders working on childcare, housing, economic development, employment, and education issues to paint a multi-dimensional picture of the barriers faced by Guilford County residents. The collaborative has conducted focus groups, interviews, and surveys that revealed primary barriers include non-flexible class schedules that conflict with work schedules, lack of access to childcare, the inability to apply existing credentials to current job prospects, and a lack of on-the-job training that would boost retention.



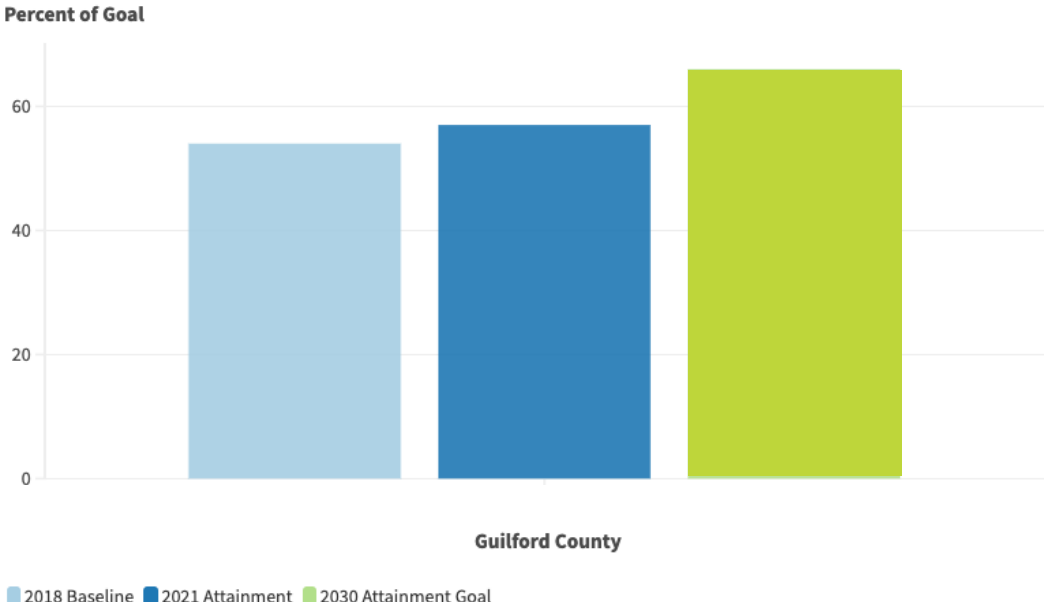
The LEAC also interviewed regional employers to understand industry requirements for educational attainment over the next five years. These interviews confirmed the need for higher educational attainment levels to successfully match Guilford County job-seekers with meaningful employment.

The partners in the LEAC concluded that a blanket approach to increasing educational attainment and job placement would not be successful in Guilford County. Instead, the collaborative worked with individual communities and neighborhoods to design hyperlocal pilot projects for addressing the issues. Through the information-gathering phase, the collaborative learned that previous efforts lacked buy-in from many communities because those efforts did not fully engage the intended constituencies. As a result, the collaborative is focused on engaging community leaders to recruit ten people for two census-tract-level pilots. The goal is to engage these community leaders to recruit a small pilot group locally and to provide those residents with holistic advising and wraparound services to improve their educational outcomes. “We will connect the ten participants in each pilot program with mentors who can address their specific barriers to educational attainment on a personal level,” says David Bolton, assistant director of community impact for GuilfordWorks.

“These pilots are case studies to ensure we’re truly addressing the barriers that we saw during the information collection phase of our work,” explains Danielle Harrison, executive director of GuilfordWorks. “We want to see how we can best equip people with the specific tools and resources they need to succeed.”

Historically, most work being done to increase educational attainment in Guilford County has operated at a system-wide level. However, some residents can find these systems difficult to access or navigate. A hyperlocal focus allows community leaders to recruit and provide comprehensive and customized support to people seeking opportunities. In turn, hyperlocal program site insights can inform the broader systems and adjust their services as needed.

### myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives Measuring Progress





## Policies and Other Barriers

The GJ30 LEAC is transitioning from being housed in a community philanthropic organization to a workforce development board. The transition raises questions about how to build a sustainable effort, name the group to reflect its long-term goals, and identify a mission to which all stakeholders can truly commit. In seeking to answer these questions, the collaborative will continue to clarify its stakeholder priorities and adjust its nomenclature and mission to reflect the group's values.

The collaborative has been challenged in setting a reasonable goal for educational attainment. The initial goal was to ensure that 60 percent of Guilford County residents would be certified in some credential. "That's an ambitious goal," Bolton says, "and it's time we revisit all of our goals and ensure that they're reasonable and not deflating our motivation."

The hyperlocal nature of the LEAC's work has presented challenges as well. The GJ30 collaborative works hyperlocally to address specific educational attainment issues within individual census tracts in Guilford County. "But, it's harder to tap into local conversations," says Lisa Escue of Reading Connections. "Most of the people we are trying to reach are not sitting on boards; they're not the people who folks would have traditionally reached out to for participation in the program."



## Resource Flows and Sustainability

GJ30 aims to have 40 individuals go through the LEAC pilot over the next three years, with 60 percent of those participants completing their credentials and attaining a job. The collaborative is hiring two people to help engage community leaders, recruit pilot participants, and track progress throughout the launch and scaling phases. As the pilot yields initial results, the collaborative will carefully track results and share the impact. The collaborative seeks to ensure sustainability by recruiting program participants who can serve as ambassadors and coordinators, which means they will share the results in their own networks and help attract future participants.



# Mental Models and Power Dynamics

GJ30 is trying to change systems with a bottom-up approach. It is an interesting model, and the LEAC knows the question will be, "Can they reach scale with this approach?"

