Sampson Connect

Sampson County

Collaborative Case Study

"It takes so much time to see a shift in how things are done," says Butler, "so we need to communicate our wins to our stakeholders so we can continue doing this work."

―――――――――――

"Moving forward, the group wants to hire a full-time executive director to manage the collaborative, raise awareness, and regularly engage all stakeholders."
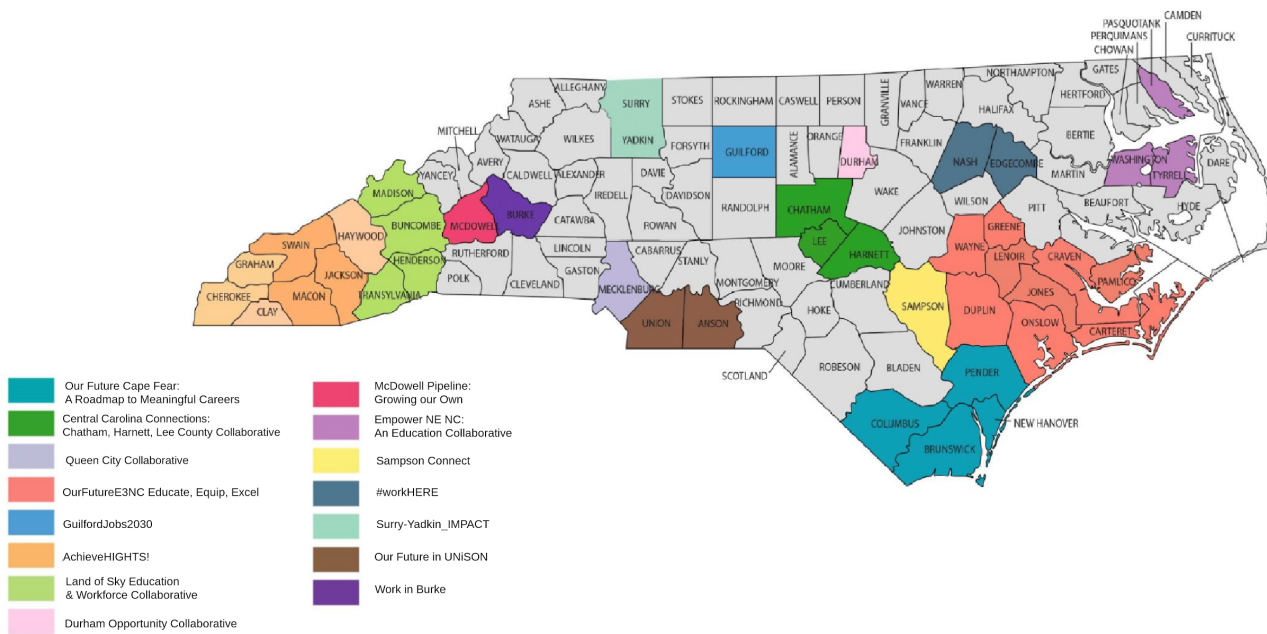
What is Sampson Connect?

Sampson Connect is a myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaborative (LEAC) focused on increasing credential attainment in the Sampson County region. The collaborative seeks to bolster enrollment throughout the educational pipeline, give more opportunities to the business community to hire locally, and recruit and retain the area's growing Latinx student population.

myFutureNC Local Educational Collaboratives

Legend:

Color	Collaborative
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	

Sampson County Economic Development
Attracts and retains business for Sampson County while engaging with education and workforce partners so businesses have the workforce they need to thrive.

Town of Roseboro Mayor's Office
Provides municipal resources and political support to collaborate on workforce issues with the business community and schools.

Sampson Community College
Develops and delivers courses and programs for students of various backgrounds to prepare them for their intended career path. Works with regional K-12 systems, community organizations, and local governments to coordinate efforts and provide pathways for student success.

First and foremost, Sampson Connect has focused on improving information sharing among regional workforce partners. "Before we participated in the LEAC, each organization and institution did not know what other entities were doing," says Alice Butler, mayor of Roseboro. "Everyone was very much in their own lanes. This collaborative has helped us learn more about what we're all doing—and how we can work together to move the needle." Stephen Barrington, former executive director of Sampson County Economic Development, agrees.

"We've been able to build and solidify relationships that had not been formed before our participation in the LEAC," he says.

Specifically, the collaborative widely shares information about efforts at Sampson Community College to drive awareness in the business community. These efforts have become even more relevant as the COVID-19 pandemic presented increasing challenges for worker recruitment. As a result, business leaders have become more invested in Sampson Connect because they understand the benefits of increasing the number of workforce-ready job-seekers. This growing collaboration between the community college and regional employers has led the college to re-prioritize its Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, resulting in an increased focus on technical education.

By engaging various community organizations, Sampson Connect has developed an in-depth understanding of how fast the Latinx community is growing in the county. As a result, the region's high schools and Sampson Community College are focusing on bilingual language accessibility in their coursework and outreach related to Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion. "At the college, we're hiring Spanish-speaking truck-driving instructors to increase completion rates for the course and pass rates for the trucking test," says Lisa Turlington, dean of advancement for Sampson Community College. "We're also hiring Spanish-speaking success coaches who can mentor our Latinx students."

myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives
Measuring Progress

Percent of Goal

Sampson County

■ 2018 Baseline ■ 2021 Attainment ■ 2030 Attainment Goal
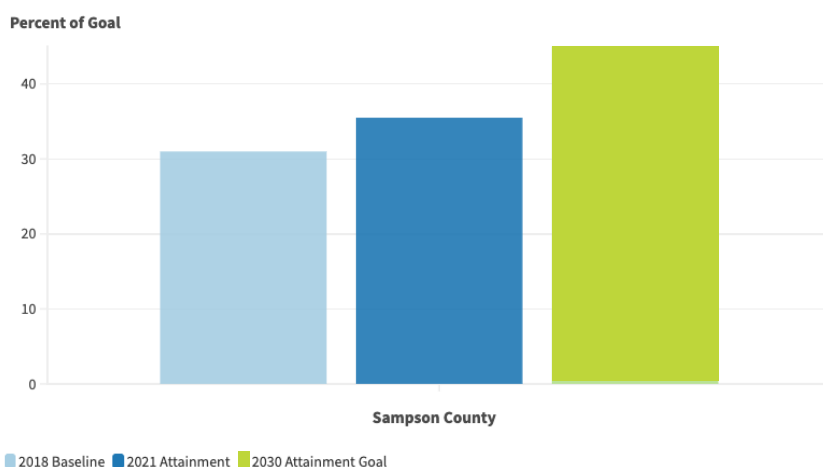
Despite efforts at bilingual accessibility, language barriers continue to exist for various organizations engaged in the LEAC as they work to recruit, connect with, and retain Spanish-speaking students. As a result, the local governments, schools, and community college are working to hire more personnel to support the growing Latinx population as they enroll in credential programs and look to fill jobs that the community's economy needs. The region also has a growing number of undocumented students who must pay out-of-state tuition for post-secondary education. The collaborative is leveraging available regional resources to provide grants and funding for these students as they pursue their higher education attainment opportunities.

One ever-present barrier is the time it takes to roll out program or policy changes and sustain stakeholder buy-in throughout the lengthy process. "It takes so much time to see a shift in how things are done," says Butler, "so we need to communicate our wins to our stakeholders so we can continue doing this work."

Resource Flows and Sustainability

The Sampson Connect collaborative meets monthly to share and track progress and brainstorm how to recruit more stakeholders as the business community grows and requires more local talent. "We need to raise awareness on what our collaborative is doing regularly so that our business leaders who might not live in the community are still engaged in everything that's going on here," says Butler. "For example, we have a business leader who works in Sampson County but lives in Cary, and he doesn't really have any other connection to this place. In my role as mayor, I was able to help him connect with the people and organizations he needs to help grow his workforce. We likely wouldn't have done that before forming as a LEAC."

Moving forward, the group wants to hire a full-time executive director to manage the collaborative, raise awareness, and regularly engage all stakeholders. "Everyone is stretched thin—from educators to business leaders. That's why we need a full-time person," says Butler.

This team is very focused on high-value credentials. By building capacity with a full-time hire and continuing to engage educational stakeholders and the business community, the LEAC hopes to increase attainment in Sampson County by 1,500 credentials by 2030, for a total of 6,000 credentials achieved.

2 MILLION BY 2030

DOGWOOD HEALTH TRUST

John M Belk Endowment
ELEVATE THROUGH EDUCATION

UNCRural

UNC | SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT
ncIMPACT Initiative

myFUTURENC
2 million by 2030