



CCR

CANSLER COLLABORATIVE RESOURCES, INC

September 2020

Expanding Opportunities for Employment for Students with
Intellectual & Other Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in North
Carolina's Community College System

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 99235 Raleigh, NC 27624-9235

Office Phone: 919. 334.4193

canslercollaborativeresources.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary2

Overview5

Methodology.....5

 Interviews and Presentations6

 Post-Secondary Systems Mapping/Program Environmental Scan.....7

 Literature Review and Best Practice Research.....8

Findings 15

 Addressing Service Gaps 15

 Improved Internal Program Coordination 16

 Enhanced External Agency Coordination 17

 Improved Internal Organizational Supports..... 19

 Improved Access to Credential Programs 19

 Funding Challenges..... 21

Recommendations 23

 Infrastructure at the NCCCS Office..... 24

 Programmatic..... 26

 Funding 28

Conclusion..... 28

Attachments 30

 Attachment A: Demographic Data for NCCCS Focus Groups 31

 Attachment B1: System Mapping 32

 Attachment B2: System Mapping: Pictures 33

 Attachment B3: System Mapping: Recommendations Notes..... 34

 Attachment C: Focus Groups Attendee List by Community College 35

 Attachment D: NCCCS Post-Secondary Education Options for Students with I/DD 36

 Attachment E: Focus Group notes 50

 Attachment F: Research and Literature Resources..... 61

Executive Summary

On November 1, 2019, the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) contracted with Cansler Collaborative Resources, Inc. (CCR) to review current services and activities offered in the NCCCS targeted for individuals with an intellectual disability and other developmental disabilities (I/DD). The focus of this work is to determine ways NCCCS can increase opportunities to serve individuals with I/DD to increase the number of students who secured competitive, sustainable employment after graduation.

CCR conducted research, gathered information from stakeholders and reviewed current programming.

- Need for enhanced coordination and integration of services across state and local agencies serving individuals
- Increased funding and improved meaningful outcomes
- Enhanced supports, services and structures that foster successful service delivery.

In addition to the national research review, several new and/or updated plans have recently been published relevant to North Carolina. **Executive Order 92, Employment First for North Carolinians with Disabilities** directs state government to become a leader in recruiting and creating an inclusive job climate for workers with disabilities and to increase opportunities for fair wages, employment, and careers for individuals with disabilities. The **2019 draft Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act-NC Works Plan, 2020** outlines NC's direction regarding pathways to employment. NC's Medicaid Plan provides for eligibility and services options that have a significant impact on the lives of individuals with I/DD. Medicaid is the largest payer for services and supports for individuals with I/DD and The NC Medicaid 1915c Waiver for Individuals with I/DD, *Innovations Waiver*¹, is the primary Medicaid funding option that supports a comprehensive Medicaid benefit and specifically an individual's attendance to community college or other secondary education and to obtain ongoing support on a job site.

Many of the current programs, activities and emerging initiatives are exemplary and serve as a starting point for many of the recommendations. Multiple themes emerged from the literature review, focus group information, and the mapping exercise related to the goals of increasing enrollment of students with I/DD and securing employment post-graduation from high school.

Study participants demonstrated commitment to improving programs; serving more students; expanding internal and external collaborations; and increasing partnerships in the community. The three (3) major areas for the themes recommended from the literature review were:

- Enhanced supports, services and structures that foster successful service delivery and opportunities
- Need for enhanced coordination and integration of services within the college systems and among state and local agencies serving individuals
- Increased funding and improved meaningful outcomes

¹ (NC Innovations Waiver)

Across all focus groups, attendees voice the following needs:

- Expanded service array and models with key elements using best practices for job and skill development
- Ability to have real work experiences rather than simulations or prevocational type activities, and
- Additional resources to plan, develop and network with employers to identify training areas

Based upon a survey questionnaire, there are thirty (30) programs across twenty-seven (27) colleges which serve students with I/DD based upon reviewed information provided by the NCCCS central office staff. Local autonomy among the colleges is a core value of the community college system in NC. However, there is need to have some balance between consistency among all community college campuses and the need for each campus to have levels of flexibility to promote innovation and creativity to meet the unique needs of their community and/or region.

The NCCCS varied sources of funding streams tend to be categorical, meaning that the funding has set requirements based upon the originating federal or state legislation or rule. Despite limited funding, there are progressive programs in the NCCCS achieving good employment outcomes which would indicate that programs are accomplishing the measures or are using a combination of alternative funding such as grants and/or local allocations to fund successful programs. Some examples of success include:

- increasing access to functional Math /Reading Skills programs,
- non-certificate agricultural programs,
- culinary programs where students are uniquely supported to complete the SERV Safe Certification, and
- student focused modifications in a hospitality program whose focus is on high-demand specific, local job market skills.

The recommendations presented are derived from the findings of the environmental scan of existing programs, service mapping of the existing system, interviews with staff and focus groups, review of the research, and utilizing a lens to support a framework of local service delivery.

These recommendations also include centralized statewide guidance while empowering local creativity and innovation that meets the unique geographic, cultural and job market of the colleges, recognizing that service and program delivery is local. The recommendations centered in the following areas:

- **Planning and development of educational components** that include programs which lead to a micro-credential, a certificate and employment outcome within a year
- **Offering of training and educational components** that include improving employability skills, on the job training and offer internship/apprenticeships which include real job experiences.
- **Alignment of policy and procedures** that are required internally to the NCCCS. In addition, policy alignment is needed but not limited to, state agencies, such as: NCCCS, DHHS, Commerce, DPI, and the Public Schools Transitional Services.
- **Expand knowledge within the NCCCS and addresses cross departmental supports** within the individual colleges including but not limited to:
 - Best practices for teaching individuals and vocational training for individuals with I/DD.
 - Financial & benefits counseling
 - Assistive Technology

- Increased access, with supports, to certificate & degree programs, including micro-credentials established by NCCCS
- Strategies and practices to increase orientation and integration into the college community to the greatest extent possible.
- **Increase needs assessment, marketing, and evaluation** to serve a broad array of individuals with developmental and other similar disabilities or learning challenges to assure adequate demand for new or existing programs.
- **Maximization and leveraging of Funding** should be available to support programs or models at all fifty-eight (58) community colleges.

A lead position should be established in the NCCCS office that is responsible to begin facilitating systematic processes of increasing integration of students with I/DD within the college campuses, across departments within the college system. This position should have a lead role in convening all fifty-eight community colleges with a goal of establishing a unified vision and framework for serving individuals with I/DD.

- Realign and expand as needed the NCCCS Office structure to create ownership to support the implementation and replication of the framework, best practices, and shared experiences among designated staff in each community college.
- Create a cross agency coordinating committee. This committee should be representative of public and private organizations providing policy planning, advocacy and funding for services and supports for people with I/DD.
- Establish and communicate policy with clear expectations and boundaries for colleges to allow for innovation and flexibility while maintaining fidelity to the vision and performance benchmarking and measures.
- Expand partnerships with VR with a goal of increasing the employer network for the current legacy programs to achieve post-secondary competitive employment outcomes.
- Evaluate the current model elements and establish wider ‘curbs’ to address its challenges to enhance programming and outcomes.
- Implement a flexible program model that will allow for feedback to be implemented timely and with ease.
- Establish a certificate or “micro-certificate program” that individuals with I/DD can receive either through partnerships or within the college system.
- Expanding and defining the ‘curbs’ of how money is earned/allocated across the program enabling adjustments based upon regional or geographic employment needs, local opportunities or internal structural supports by each community.
- Establish, in collaboration with DPI and VR, a consistent, statewide transition program with students in middle and high schools to address the transition protocol, and the role and opportunities within the community colleges for implementation among all the local community colleges.
- Establish a collaborative relationship with NC Medicaid that fosters discussions and results to expand successful employment opportunities for individuals with ID/D.
- Continue the analysis of all funding streams across the college system used to support students with I/DD.

Overview

On November 1, 2019, the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) engaged Cansler Collaborative Resources, Inc. (CCR) to review current NCCCS services and activities offered for individuals with an intellectual disability and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) to determine ways NCCCS can increase enrollment and increase the number of students who secured competitive, sustainable employment after graduation. The strategic question to be answered is: ‘What should the NCCCS do to expand the employment opportunities of adults with I/DD securing sustainable employment with NC employers across the state?’

The scope of work encompassed the following:

- Conduct an environment scan and literature review of vocational options, services and supports available, or which should be available, within the community setting. This scan will include conversations with I/DD specialists in the State’s LME-MCO Network, the Medicaid prepaid health plans, advocacy organizations, and others who may provide valuable insight into the needs and opportunities in serving this population across the State
- Conduct focus groups and solicit other input from individuals and their families with I/DD about vocational aspirations and needed supports. Focus groups or other input will include individuals with various types of disabilities within the I/DD spectrum including but not limited to those individuals with cerebral palsy, brain injury and autism spectrum disorders.
- Facilitate a System Mapping project in collaboration with the System Office and other state agencies to develop a greater understanding of the Community College System and its interactions with Vocational Rehabilitation, and Workforce Board programs, services, and resources.
- Review existing service offerings and compare to the information derived from the environmental scan, literature review, and focus groups to develop a gap analysis and recommendations for expanding support for the I/DD population within the Community College System to deal with the gaps identified.
 - The gaps identified will, at a minimum, include; geographic location, types of vocational pathways offered, categories of students with disabilities served, staff training, recommended action steps for implementation and connections to other mainstream college offerings (such as the Small Business Centers).
 - In addition, the recommendations will also include any steps needed to allow existing and future programs to use available State and Federal dollars more efficiently.
- Deliver a final report reflecting the findings and recommendations

Methodology

This project utilized three (3) phases to reach the recommendations presented. Those phases included:

- Structured interviews, focus groups or presentations with a variety of stakeholders including governmental policy administrators, instructors in the NCCCS, individuals and families who utilized or wish to access services and the NCCCS State Board
- Literature review of evidence informed and evidence-based practices and findings that address preparing individuals with I/DD gaining sustainable, competitive employment

- System mapping to illustrate how individuals gain knowledge about and enter the NCCCS for services.

Interviews and Presentations

CCR engaged and solicited input from NCCCS State Board, staff among the NCCCS campuses and other key stakeholders. Among the many participants who shared their expertise were:

- i2i Center for Integrated Health Conference Cross-Systems Advisory focus group
 - Participants included families, advocates, and individuals with an intellectual or other developmental disability; at least one (1) of whom had been a part of NCCCS program and two parents who had a family member with I/DD that attended a community college.
 - This group seemed key given that *The Cross-Systems GPS: Guiding People & Systems initiative's goal is to develop recommendations for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) how individuals with I/DD and their families can best be supported to effectively navigate across various service systems (cross-system navigation) as DHHS moves toward implementation of Medicaid Transformation (managed care to improve and integrate behavioral and I/DD healthcare and physical healthcare services).*
- NCCCS State Board with follow up interview with Board Member, Lisa Estep
- NCCCS faculty and personnel (Three regional focus groups)
 - Participants included community college staff who have a role in serving adults with I/DD and key community partners who have integrated roles into the programming/courses offered by the local community college.
 - Participants were identified by senior NCCCS leaders and local colleges and through their own initiative, chose to bring additional staff as they deemed beneficial
- DHHS, Division of Health Benefits (Medicaid) Deputy Secretary Dave Richard
- DHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services, Kody Kinsley
- DHHS Senior Director for Employment Services, Chris Egan
- DHHS Director for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Kathie Trotter
- NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Program Policy and Planning Section Chief, Phil Protz
- Chief of Employment Services & Program Development, Alice Farrar
- North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities Executive Director, Talley Wells
- Three LME/MCO's Network Specialist or Clinical/IDD Lead
- Capital Area Workforce Developmental Board, One-Stop System Director, Jane P. Sterner
- Capital Area Workforce Developmental Board, Workforce Development Specialist, Jessica Locklear McLeod

With each of the focus groups and/or interviews, CCR's interview process included: 1) sharing the strategic question, "What should the Community College System do to expand opportunities for adults with I/DD in securing sustainable employment with NC employers across the state?", and 2) leading structured discussions, with only slight variations to questions to align with the audience, to thoroughly consider the strategic question and to elicit participants perspectives.

To ensure that factors of interest articulated by the NCCCS administration were identified, interviews were structured using a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) format. Through this design, CCR was able to ensure information was collected regarding funding, staffing, data and management systems, legacy

programs, curriculum, partnerships, perceived student, and caregiver needs and supports and various other topics which are documented in this report (Attachment A: Demographic Data for NCCCS Focus Groups).

CCR conducted more than sixty (60) hours of interviews. At the conclusion of the interview each participant was asked if there were other insights, they wished to share that were not covered in the interview/focus group. In addition, each participant was asked for their recommendations or action steps that would create more immediate positive opportunities and easing implementation for short term, as well as long term recommendations. This report captures those commonalities and the recurring issues cited throughout the interview process.

Post-Secondary Systems Mapping/Program Environmental Scan

To better understand the current work happening across the state to serve students with I/DD, a system mapping exercise was conducted. Agencies participating included NCCCS, Division of VR, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, Substance Abuse Services, Division of Health Benefits (Medicaid). The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the University of North Carolina System were unable to attend, but subsequently provided information.

The mapping exercise was comprised of two (2) activities. The first activity outlined how the current system functions to serve and support individuals with I/DD during their program/college enrollment (Attachment B: System Mapping). The mapping exercise identified four (4) areas from which students enter local colleges:

- Referrals from high schools, which generates the lowest percentage of students
- Referrals from the community, which includes I/DD group homes, I/DD day programs/workshops, individual advocacy, and self-referrals
- Partnerships with employers needing specific training for available jobs or additional specialized skills for current employees
- Referrals from agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation local offices, Services for the Blind local offices, and the Department of Corrections.

The second activity identified policy and process improvements that could potentially increase enrollment and improve pathways to sustainable employment. Challenges and opportunities identified in this exercise include:

- Limited availability of real work experiences
- Continued enrollment in basic skill development rather than functional work exposure
- Inability to track data across agencies/systems
- Fragmentation and dis-alignment of planning across agencies serving individuals with I/DD
- Lack of a formal coordinated structure within NCCCS and across agencies to coordinate planning, policy, procedures, and problem solving
- Varying eligibility rules by funding source
- Varying means of identifying industry/employers' needs

Literature Review and Best Practice Research

CCR collected and reviewed published research, reports and presentations that aided in this report’s findings and recommendations. From this research three (3) themes emerged, that included the need for:

- Enhanced coordination and integration of services across state and local agencies serving individuals
- Increased funding including redefined meaningful outcomes
- Enhanced supports, services and structures that foster successful service delivery.

Two (2) key sources of information, the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) and Think College were used to identify best practices. NTACT is a Technical Assistance and Dissemination project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Think College, a project of the Institute of Community Inclusion at the UMass, Boston, is a national organization which focuses on developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for people with an intellectual disability. Think College provides comparative information on more than two-hundred and fifty (250) college programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

NTACT sponsored a webinar series in 2019² which looked at how community colleges and other post-secondary entities across the country are serving individuals with I/DD. The series was produced through a collaboration between Penn State University’s Workforce Education program, the (NTACT) and Association for Career Technical Education (ACTE) and provided valuable information to inform the findings and recommendations for this report.

One of the presentations, entitled “Toward Best Practices: Programs that Work, Models Toward Success, December 19, 2019” noted best practices among states. It was reported that there are two-hundred and eighty (280) programs nationally that include a mix of dual enrollment, residential and nonresidential programs serving approximately fifty-three hundred (5,300) students. Ohio and Pennsylvania were highlighted for their strategies and approaches to move to a more collaborative, integrated student support model, which resulted in improved outcomes around integrated employment, education, training, and independent living for individuals with intellectual challenges.

The Ohio model emphasized the benefit of building a state initiative called, ‘Ohio Means Jobs’ as an Employment First State. The Ohio plan focuses on:

- Collaboration, integrated employment, education & training, and independent living
- Creating an equitable, sustainable, simplified system, aligned across agencies that reduces redundancy and improved outcomes
- Creating a chartered, coordinated interagency structure that looks at functions, funding, and best practices

² (NTACT, 2019)

Ohio attributes their success to a three (3)-prong approach of enhancing 1) policy changes centered around career advising, creating student success plans, providing oversight and support to ensure graduation requirements are met, and supporting the operations of the Business Advisory Council; 2) program enhancements included new skills for Youth Success Bound, stronger job training coordination program, work-based learning, expanding pre-employment transition services and entering into data-sharing agreements to track results; and 3) new and expanded partnerships beyond those already in place included Transition Support Partnership and their Employment First Taskforce.³ The 2018 Report ‘National Core Indicators’^{TM4} ranked Ohio 8th out of the thirty-eight (38) states reporting the percentage of individuals with a developmental disability employed.

NTACT released an additional webinar “Using Post-School Outcome (PSO) and Career & Technical Education (CTE) Data to Address Student Outcomes, on February 14, 2019” that focused on working across state agencies to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities accessing CTE in Oregon. In this webinar, the Oregon Department of Education identified four (4) common myths concerning students with I/DD and reframed those myths with the following affirming, motivational messaging:

- Students with disabilities can succeed in Career and Technical Education programs (CTE),
- Students with disabilities can be safe and be trusted in a CTE environment,
- Students with disabilities can pass the Technical Skills Assessment (TSA) or other end-of-program evaluation; and,
- CTE is an acceptable learning environment for students when CTE faculty and staff are prepared and trained.

Their goal was to use affirming, aspirational language to create a positive culture that supports achieving success.

CCR also reviewed Think College’s brief, **Positive Outcomes for Students with Intellectual Disability Attending College: Why Medicaid Waivers Should Provide Support**. This brief provided data and summarization of research which supports individuals with intellectual disabilities participation in postsecondary education (PSE) using Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers. In NC this are referred to as the Innovations Waiver. Think College reports an employment rate of about 60% for students who have post-secondary experiences compared to an overall employment rate of 17% of individuals with DD nationwide. **This strongly illustrates that post-secondary experiences will lead to greater opportunities for obtaining and sustaining employment**

The brief summarizes information from multiple sources, citing data that supports that individuals with I/DD “could greatly improve their likelihood of employment, as well as opportunities to experience greater community inclusion, personal satisfaction, and decreased reliance on publicly provided support services. Students in at least nine (9) states have already used HCBS waivers as a funding source for service and supports while in college.” The brief further cites studies that show:

- students earn higher wages and use 31% fewer government funded services than students with only a high school education, and

³ (Penn State College of Education, 2019)

⁴ (BRIEF, 2018)

- students with I/DD who received post-secondary education are more independent.

As a result of their finding, enhancements within North Carolina’s Medicaid program to support more individuals with I/DD to enrollment in post-secondary education programs is worth exploring.⁵ In addition, as NC moves forward with Medicaid transformation, exploration of avenues within the 1115 Waiver structure such as value-added services may also be an additional option.

In addition to the national research review, several new and/or updated plans have recently been published relevant to North Carolina. On March 28, 2019, Governor Roy Cooper issued **Executive Order 92, Employment First for North Carolinians with Disabilities** that directs state government to become a leader in recruiting and creating an inclusive job climate for workers with disabilities and to increase opportunities for fair wages, employment, and careers for individuals with disabilities. Securing, sustainable, meaningful employment requires job training and job placement supports, a function for NCCCS.

CCR also reviewed the **2019 draft Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act-NC Works Plan, 2020** to obtain a broader understanding of NC’s direction regarding pathways to employment. The report contains current data regarding employment opportunities as well as identifying key partners and their roles in assisting individuals in obtaining employment. Important to this work is the fact that “working with individuals with a disability” has now been added to the updated state plan. This addition provides a pathway for increased opportunities to work with partner agencies in addressing the needs of students with I/DD. In addition, the state plan should consider those recommendations and findings from a July 2018 Report⁶, as the state begins to address barriers identified in this document. The NC Works Plan specifically cites NC Vocational Rehabilitation’s role in assuring policy and funding to support postsecondary education and jobs for people with disabilities.

In September 2015, the Advisory Committee on Increasing Integrated Employment for Individuals with disabilities established under Section 609 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by section 461 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, provided an interim report to the Secretary of Labor on how to increase competitive integrated employment for individuals with I/DD. The report notes that students with I/DD who have one or two Post-Secondary Education (PSE) classes can earn up to seventy (70) percent higher wages than individuals with I/DD who do not have PSE experiences. The report also states: “Research has proven that early exposure to Competitive Integrated Employment and/or integrated work experiences during high school is the number one predictor of post-school employment success for youth with I/DD and other significant disabilities.⁷ This finding remains true in 2020.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) should be considered a key partner in addressing policy and funding to increase enrollment in community colleges that result in employment and jobs for individuals with I/DD. Primarily, the Division of Mental Health/Intellectual and other Developmental Disabilities/Substance Use Services (DMH/DD/SAS), the Division of Health Benefits (Medicaid) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) have the most responsibility toward the objective for employment and supports for individuals with I/DD. DMH/DD/SAS is charged with responsibility for providing guidance, policy direction, oversight and establishing rules for the delivery and operations of services and supports for individuals with I/DD, located primary under GS 122C. DMH/DD/SAS must rely on Medicaid for most of the

⁵ (Landau, 2019)

⁶ (Addressing the Policy Tangle: Students with Intellectual Disability and the Path to Postsecondary Education, Employment and Community Living, July 2018)

⁷ (Disabilities, 2015)

funding to support individuals, and as a result, they closely coordinate policy and funding initiatives while recognizing that there may be competing priorities between the two divisions related for funding.

Central to addressing a comprehensive program serving individuals with I/DD in NCCCS, is the need to fully understand and adopt a common definition of I/DD that is used across the state among key partners. In North Carolina, the definition of developmental disability has already been adopted as set forth in General Statutes 122C-3(12a) and states:

- Developmental disability: A severe, chronic disability of a person that satisfies all the following:
 - Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments.
 - Is manifested before the person attains age twenty-two (22) unless the disability is caused by a traumatic head injury and is manifested after age twenty-two (22).
 - Is likely to continue indefinitely.
 - Results in substantial functional limitations in three (3) or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, capacity for independent living, learning, mobility, self-direction, and economic self-sufficiency.
 - Reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of special interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services which are of a lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.
 - When applied to children from birth through four (4) years of age, a developmental disability may be evidenced as a developmental delay.

This definition is inclusive of individuals with conditions which manifest as the above such as cerebral palsy, autism spectrum, etc. NCGS 122C-3(17a) further defines intellectual disability as developmental disability characterized by significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested before age twenty-two (22). The combination of these two (2) definitions are the foundations for I/DD services and supports in NC.

Medicaid eligibility and service options have a significant presence in the lives of individuals with I/DD. Medicaid is the largest payer for services and supports for individuals with I/DD and most individuals qualify at some point, given the eligibility options for people with disabilities or access to certain programs. If North Carolina expands Medicaid, the increase in the income eligibility for adults, would result in more individuals being covered by Medicaid, inclusive of those with I/DD.

The NC Medicaid 1915c Waiver for Individuals with I/DD, *Innovations Waiver*⁸, has a significant waitlist. This is the primary Medicaid funding option that supports a comprehensive Medicaid benefit and specifically an individual's attendance to community college or other secondary education and to obtain ongoing support on a job site. The Innovations Waiver is administered by the seven (7) regionally defined Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations (LME/MCOs).

The LME/MCOs also administer Non-Medicaid state appropriations for behavioral health and I/DD services. These funds are fixed appropriations and have seen legislative recurring and non-recurring budget reductions in every year beginning in FY2015-16. Even with a requirement for the LME/MCOs to spend at the same level as FY2015, these funds do not meet all of the behavioral health and I/DD needs of the uninsured population

⁸ (NC Innovations Waiver)

because the funds were never based on the population need, but rather a fixed appropriation. The use of state appropriations is not seen as a long-term viable solution to increasing enrollment for individuals with I/DD in general unless an additional, targeted appropriation is requested and provided.

CCR reviewed both the most recent Innovations Waiver application submitted to and approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the *Medicaid Clinical Coverage Policy 8-P* through the filter of:

- Does the waiver have a service definition that supports attendance to a community college?
- Does the waiver have service definition(s) that support job training or job coaching?
- Are there policy changes that can be recommended to maximize the use of the Waiver to support I/DD services in the community college?

The services of Community Network, Community Navigation, Supported Employment and Community Living and Supports have the most relevance for the focus with the community college. The other waiver services can support the individual by providing needed supplies or equipment while in attendance.

The Community Networking service is one of the key services for supporting the individual in the community colleges. The simple answer is this service will cover the attendance to the community college programs. It enables the individual to increase or maintain their capacity for independence and develop social roles valued by individuals without disabilities of the community by:

- Identifying the attendance and participation in adult education (College, Vocational Studies, and other educational opportunities) opportunities as an allowable billable activity.
- Identifying transportation to and from the location is an additional rate in the service if transportation is not already provided via other means. Medicaid covers “Transportation, when the activity does not include staffing support and the destination of the transportation is an integrated community setting or a self-advocacy activity. Payments for transportation are an established per trip charge or mileage.”⁹

The supported Employment service leverages Vocational Rehabilitation services first or when available and the Medicaid waiver supported employment service option picks up when the VR service options are exhausted or not available. Supported Employment aids with:

- Choosing, acquiring, and maintaining a job for individuals ages sixteen (16) and older for whom competitive employment has not been achieved and /or has been interrupted or intermittent.
- Assisting individuals with developing skills to seek, obtain and maintain competitive employment or developing and operating a micro-enterprise.
- Maintaining employment and sustaining any micro enterprises.

While supported employment is critical, services such as community support and community navigation are important aspects of the service array. Community support, such as assistance with shopping, registering for programs, and other activities that promote independence, are essential for employment stability to assist the individual in using the job placement or college attendance to its fullest while applying the skills in their other

⁹ (Medicaid Clinical Coverage Policy 8-P)

aspects of life . Community navigation provides opportunities for individuals to connect with resources that also promotes employment stability.

When the individual participates in Medicaid managed care another opportunity for the use of Medicaid funding is the option of an In-Lieu of Services. In-Lieu of services are defined as alternative services that are not covered in the state Medicaid plan but are medically appropriate and are more cost-effective services or settings.

Effective July 6, 2016, federal regulations allowed and clarified the use of cost-effective alternative services that are approved by the State to be offered by Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MMCOs)¹⁰, which in North Carolina are the LME/MCOs that manage the services and supports for I/DD. These regulations had a rolling implementation schedule with most regulations being put in place during the 2018/2019 state fiscal year. Thus, this is a relatively new option and has only recently been implemented in NC on a limited basis for some mental health, substance use and I/DD services. Exploring this option to serve individuals with I/DD, may help serve to address the long wait list for the Innovations Waiver.

Title XIX of the Social Security Act (Medicaid) also authorizes federal funds to be drawn by the State Medicaid Agency for expenditures necessary for administration of the Medicaid program. Section 1903(a) of the Act sets forth the rates of federal participation for different types of expenditures. Under section 1903(a)(7) of the Act, federal participation is set at a rate of fifty (50) percent for amounts expended by a state “as found necessary by the Secretary for the proper and efficient administration of the state plan,” per 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 433.15(b)(7). This federal rule allows the Medicaid agency to draw a percentage of federal funds to pay for internal and external entities, governmental or private, to assist with the implementation and ongoing operation of the NC’s Medicaid program, options relevant for this project to include:

- conduct outreach, referral, and assistance that may be provided to carry out certain programs, such as the Innovation Waiver or benefit counseling around eligibility.
- collection of data and analysis of data to determine if outcomes or priorities are achieved within certain program areas of Medicaid such as is the supported employment service getting more individuals in competitive jobs or are individuals enrolling in community colleges by using the Community Networking service.
- assist in the payment of councils or committees, payment of stipends for individuals to participate on workgroups, coordination among agencies, or staff to support the activity that benefits the Medicaid program and helps in the efficiency and effectiveness of operations and to the Medicaid beneficiary.

The final option for Medicaid funding is the concept of using managed care saving to reinvest into the service delivery. This is often done through the addition of value-added services or accessing an additional Medicaid authority referred to as B-3 services. These services are not written into the state Medicaid benefit; this allows each managed care entity, at their discretion, typically with state approval, to offer tailored services to their enrollees. Examples might include paying for gym memberships, GED testing, transportation not typically covered, etc. The intent is the extra financial coverage ultimately adds value quality of life to the individual and thus lowers health risk and higher cost services.

¹⁰ (2016 Medicaid Managed Care Regulations)

Individuals with I/DD who are still in school have additional safeguards that must be provided. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 04)¹¹ requires that in the first individual Education Plan (IEP) which goes into effect when the student turns sixteen (16) years of age, must include a discussion about transition service needs (some states may mandate that the process start even earlier). A statement of those needs, based upon this transition assessment and future goals, must then be written into his IEP. IDEA 04 mandates that the annual IEP meeting focuses on more specific planning and goal setting for the necessary transition services. Factors to be included are academic preparation, community experience, development of vocational and independent living objectives, and, if applicable, a functional vocational evaluation. The agreed upon school to adult transition plans must then be documented in the student’s IEP. The law also requires that a statement of the student’s transition goals and services be included in the transition plan. Schools must report to parents on the student’s progress toward meeting his transition goals. Thus, the knowledge about community college programs and opportunities is an important aspect in the work in the middle and high school planning for both teachers and families.

As part of the project, CCR was charged with determining gaps in services for the I/DD population. According to the NC Department of Health Human Services, Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment 2019 report¹², individuals with the most significant disabilities (MSD) accounted for 21.2% for two-thousand, eight hundred and seventy-one (2,871) eligible VR consumers served. MSD is defined as those individuals who require assistance to mitigate limitations in three (3) or more functional capacities regarding employment, which is consistent with limitations set forth in the DD definition. The table below provides some key findings of the report and helps to illustrate individuals who may or have benefitted from the partnership with VR.

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Report Category</i>	<i>Percentage/Number</i>
Percentage of population served	Community college training	4.9%
	College or university training	5.2%
	Literacy Training	3.3%
Percentage with most significant disabilities	671 Total Respondents	44.1%
Percentage reporting need	Job readiness training	14.6%
Percentage for transition youth age 14 to 24	3,037 total individuals served	19.4%
	Students with disabilities	59.4%
Percentage of VR eligible	With MSD	28.2%
	With significant disabilities	57.7%
	Without significant disabilities	9.7%
Percentage provided counseling	NCCCS provided counseling post-secondary enrollment opportunities	25.1%
Percentage of rehabilitation professionals responding	Most important need is jobs training	26.7%

During the interview with VR shared information about a pilot project with three community colleges, Central Piedmont Community College, Wake Tech and Pitt Community College and the TEACH program at UNC Chapel Hill. The pilot focuses on education and training for children and youth who are on the Autism Spectrum. Promising practices are being documented by NTACT and Think College which includes curriculum programs, outside credential programs, and outside diploma programs. The final report is pending with the NC

¹¹ (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004)
¹² (NC DHHS Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment)

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the results of this pilot should be reviewed and leveraged across the NCCCS.

Findings

Many of the current programs, activities and emerging initiatives in the colleges are exemplary and serve as a starting point for many of the recommendations. Multiple themes emerged from the literature review, focus group information, and the mapping exercise related to the goals of increasing work opportunities of students with I/DD and securing employment post-graduation from high school. These themes included:

- increasing students served through offering of meaningful work programs
- expanding internal and external collaborations among and across state and local agencies
- increasing partnerships in the local communities
- increasing funding to improve meaningful outcomes
- enhancing supports, services and program structures that foster successful service delivery.

Addressing Service Gaps

To address the service gap and thus increase enrollment, the focus groups, attendees expressed the need to:

- Expand the service array and models with key elements using best practices for job and skill development
- Offer real work experiences rather than simulations or prevocational type activities, and
- Additional resources to plan, develop and network with employers to identify training areas

Earlier in 2020, NCCCS distributed a survey to the colleges regarding services offered to individuals with IDD. Based upon the return of the surveys, there are thirty (30) programs across twenty-seven (27) colleges which serve students with I/DD based upon information provided by the NCCCS central office staff. Again, this information was compiled from the survey that was distributed to the college and reflect information only from the colleges that completed and returned the survey.

Unfortunately, after close examination of the data, it became apparent given the variance and limitations that no comparisons could be concluded other than the beginning of identification of program offerings to assist in establishing baseline information about currently existing services.

CCR reviewed the national data as represented in the Intact Webinar Series. In comparison to NCCCS, utilizing the survey results, NCCCS has sixteen (16) programs which meet or exceed this benchmark and fourteen (14) programs which fall under the benchmark for a total of ninety-six (96) additional students who could be served if all the programs meet this benchmark. This benchmark comparison has limitation given this is based upon a national average and does not reflect NC College enrollment for specific program or curriculum offerings at each college or those who may be I/DD and have not been identified during the enrollment process or receiving additional support.

As noted in Attachment D: NCCCS Post-Secondary Education Options for Students with IDD, participants in the focus groups and mapping exercise, all recognize the value of work-based learning and the value of micro-credentials. CCR found that:

- Twenty-one (21) of the programs offer a credential upon completion of the program.
- only nineteen (19) of the programs report that students gain work experience in specific areas while enrolled, and
- five (5) colleges planning or in the process of adding work experience.

It should be noted that the array of work experience options tended to be limited.

While focus group participants identified work experience as a need, they also discussed the need for ‘soft skill’ development and shared concerns that students can end up in a repetitive cycle of skills development to develop work skills, sometimes referred to as pre-vocational training. Soft skill development is not classroom-based job activities. “The Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), is a curriculum that focuses on preparing youth, including those with disabilities, for readiness in the workplace. The foundation of the ‘soft skills’ curriculum concentrates on the intangibles of work, including communication, enthusiasm and attitude, teamwork, networking, problem solving, critical thinking and professionalism.”¹³

The twenty-seven (27) reporting colleges are regionally dispersed, except for the far southwest portion of the state. Ten (10) of the colleges are in more urban areas with five (5) in counties near or adjacent to either Charlotte, Raleigh, or Asheville. It should be noted that transportation challenges were highlighted as a current barrier for students with I/DD, regardless of whether in an urban or rural area.

Currently there are not minimum standardized program requirements addressing I/DD specifically. When there are no common requirements or models, it is difficult to determine specific programmatic gaps within the existing programs. A focus on integration into established community college programs requires a different analysis to evaluate a program model that may segregate students with I/DD into their own program. Both models can be effective depending on the vision or if they share a goal of successful employment. The method or means of accomplishment varies but not the outcome of obtaining and maintaining successful job placements

Improved Internal Program Coordination

A re-occurring theme that emerged from the focus group participants was the lack of coordination and internal linkages across NCCCS offices and departments and across the various campuses. One concrete example was “no formal mechanism in place for solving cross program issues, learning about one another’s roles, and sharing resources” within the local college or at the NCCCS office.

Several participants stated they would like to have enough information to feel they can answer basic questions about other college programs/resources that serve individuals with I/DD within their individual campus.

Solutions identified include:

- quarterly meetings,
- I/DD specific training opportunities,
- joint trainings with other college programs, and
- cross agency/college planning opportunities

¹³ (Office of Disability Employment Policy, US Department of Labor, Soft Skills for Workplace Success)

CCR's understanding is that planning opportunities include 1) how to identify students with I/DD or those in need of supports due to other disabilities or challenges, 2) means of integrating students across college programs, 3) strategies to support students while on campus, 4) the generation of new or amended measures that would still meet federal and state funding formulas, 5) consistency on the reporting and criteria for the existing measures and 6) sharing of model programs and steps for implementations.

Enhanced External Agency Coordination

In general, all NCCCS have relationships with key partnering agencies, such as schools, VR, and LME/MCO's. However, there are considerable inconsistencies throughout the system regarding how these relationships are defined and the desired outcome of each relationship. As discussions evolved in the focus groups, some colleges reported regular contact with key partners through uniform meetings; others described their relationships in less formal means; and still others stated contact happens as needed on a case by case basis when issues warrant or not at all. Throughout these discussions staff identified both a desire and a need to formalize their coordination and collaboration efforts to be more effective in obtaining outcomes for referrals, program enrollment and successful employment opportunities.

Among the needed improvements cited:

- stronger better-defined coordination between key external partnering agencies including employers, improve linkages with existing employment networks, LME/MCOs, Vocational Rehabilitation, and
- improved coordination and standardized transitional planning efforts with local high schools.

Many individuals with I/DD have Medicaid as their insurance provider and in some cases both Medicare and Medicaid. It is critical that families and colleges understand the impact that work may or may not have on their Medicaid and Medicare eligibility. There appeared to be a misunderstanding that obtaining a job would automatically mean losing eligibility to Medicaid. Medicaid eligibility is still income based, even after employment but it is not as simple as amount of salary as other factors apply.

Medicaid is North Carolina's single largest payer of long-term services and supports for individuals with I/DD. The focus groups and system mapping exercise yielded evidence of the following:

- lack of understanding of Medicaid eligibility requirements,
- lack of understanding of the use of Medicaid in covering cost of other insurances that offer benefits,
- lack of knowledge of Medicaid coverage for individuals with disabilities that allows the person to work and maintain their Medicaid benefit.
- lack of knowledge around the flexibilities or range of Medicaid funding under the traditional Medicaid fee for service program or in managed care.
- lack of knowledge of the service definitions with the Medicaid benefit.

The lack of awareness was not based upon unwillingness to explore different paths but more due to the communication, having the decision makers foster a vision that enables staff to develop the operations and implementation realities. Fostering an ongoing relationship between agencies that train individuals for work, the role of work in a person's life that support self-direction and fulfillment and the use of Medicaid funding are critical. Public policy should be aligned, to the degree possible, to promote maximizing the use of available funding and to eliminate barriers to services.

There are other agencies, such as LME/MCOs and Vocational Rehabilitation, who have funding or programs which support individuals with I/DD. Unfortunately, the real or perceived requirements of the funding streams or programs can drive fragmentation in coordination responsibilities.

The interviews with the LME/MCOs and at the focus groups revealed that the LME/MCOs and NCCCS do not have any formal, consistent means or process for addressing planning or coordination at the systemic or individual level. There was evidence of joint participation in community meetings, however these meetings did not result in systematic planning and were more incidental in nature. Opportunities are abundant for partners to discuss creative and innovative ways to better serve individuals with I/DD as the promotion of whole person care continues and with the greater emphasis on social determinants of health which is inclusive of work and meaningful day activities.

The same is true with the other service providers who deliver the services and supports to individuals. Vocational Rehabilitation may be a key service provider for many students. However, based on the anecdotal information received during this phase of the project, CCR found no consistent patterns regarding when and how students with I/DD use or access these services. There was strong evidence that there is a commitment between the state offices of VR and NCCCS to enhance the opportunities and pockets of excellence at the local levels between the colleges and local vocational rehabilitation offices. There are opportunities to enhance relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation to serve this population more effectively.

High school graduation or transition to adult activity is a life milestone and critical transition for all. This transition requires more intentional planning for youth with I/DD. Federal Law requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to initiate this transition planning beginning at age fourteen (14) and documented in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) at age sixteen (16) for students with disabilities.

From a systemic standpoint, having some formalized protocol on outreach, participation and training about the program offering of NCCCS is important. The system mapping illustrated a lower number of referrals coming to the colleges from high schools and thus may present an opportunity for increasing college enrollment. Currently, NCCCS does not have a consistent protocol or procedure in place to ensure a comprehensive approach to working with school transition services. There are funding requirements of services with both DPI and VR, however, the interviews revealed inconsistency in operations in the local communities, varying from school to school and even with individual staff. Success stories, and **there were some powerful success stories**, were based on the personal relationships developed between agency and staff. Relationships should not be minimized; however, business models and sustainability need to be memorialized and not be subject to institutional memory that is impacted by staff turnover. These transitional services are critical to exposing students and their families to post-secondary educational programs. Understanding each other's services, programs and resources could improve transitions for students.

Broader opportunities for external collaborations also should be noted. North Carolina just celebrated its first year as a designated Employment First State. The State's goal is defined as: "Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all citizens with disabilities regardless of level of disability, in a job of their choosing with supports and accommodations provided as necessary to achieve and maintain employment." This goal and philosophy align with the desired outcome NCCCS has for individuals with I/DD. Leveraging the visibility of the Executive Order and policy alignment and support that the community colleges may offer to support commerce and job focus, is an asset.

Other potential alignments were also noted, such as opportunities to partner with Governor Cooper's NC Job Ready in its promotion of education and job training for a "Career Ready NC". NC Job Ready recognizes that employer-led job training programs are necessary to ensure positive career outcomes. NC Job Ready's¹⁴ primary goals are to 1) increase work-based learning opportunities, 2) increase employer-led trainings for new and existing employees, 3) streamlined employer partnerships and 4) supporting innovation in workplace training. Employers state adaptive and responsive programming that responds timely and efficiently to their business (employee) needs. There have been past budget efforts to address workforce training, skills development, work-based learning initiatives and apprenticeship programs, all needed for this population. Thus far, none of these efforts have been funded; however, these efforts are worth mentioning in that it demonstrates both the desire and need for these services.

Improved Internal Organizational Supports

Local autonomy among the colleges is a core value of the NC community college system. However, there is a need to have some balance between consistency among all community college campuses and the need for each campus to have flexibility to promote innovation and creativity to meet the unique needs of their community and/or region. In some situations, flexibility can lead to undesirable inconsistencies. In the process of gathering information for this report it was noted that individual colleges have varying levels of resources to support current I/DD programs thus creating inconsistencies in statewide access to specialized services and programs. Entrance location for admission into the community college and the criteria and requirements that must be met, including certain assessments and timeliness of completion of programs can lead to additional challenges to serve individuals with I/DD. The requirements create a barrier that do not allow for innovation for programs within the NCCCS.

The point of decision making for resolving issues, increasing access, and making program enhancements cannot be addressed solely at the program manager level., and may require senior leadership to assist in the cross-sectional issues. Within the individual community colleges, small programs often compete for resources since they may be unable to obtain a sufficient measure to draw down funding per the state funding formula.

Improved Access to Credential Programs

The current community college environment allows for students to earn degrees, diplomas, credentials, and in some cases micro-credentials tied to specific skills. Students with I/DD can apply and enroll in a community college through several 'doors'. Depending on whether it is through the College and Readiness section; through Career and Technical Education (CTE); or, through the Workforce Continuing Education Section students may or may not be enroll in the section which provides the most appropriate education and training which results in sustainable employment.

An individual seeking enrollment who has a disability may or may not self-identify as having a disability. The assessments required to enter the college may not be adapted if the college does not know an individual has an intellectual disability and could result in an inaccurate admission decision. This can lead to other challenging issues, such as:

- once admitted, the individual may not be connected to the program which best meets their needs,

¹⁴ (ncjrhtt)

- College staff interacting with the student may themselves not be fully aware of the of the scope of these other programs, and
- Students may not complete their desired credential because they either could not master the course work, or they could not complete the work within the prescribed window.

The research indicates that both employers and students want “credentials”. The research and best practices may use the term “micro-certificate” rather than “credentials”; but for purposes of this report and to align with the current terminology used in NCCCS, credential is the term of choice. This adds value to the demonstration that skills or competencies have been met and increases self-accomplishment for the individual. Granted, not all individuals may be able to meet standard curriculum credential requirements; which is why in programs serving individuals with I/DD or students who face challenges with reading and other academic proficiencies there are benefits with micro-credentials. Employment opportunities increase when students have access and can complete a credential program. A NC Department of Commence 2019¹⁵ study found that credential programs increase the probability of employment for individuals with disabilities.

Focus group participants agreed that both potential students and enrolled students may not know or understand the opportunities that exist with credential programs to earn a credential or a micro-credential as to mastering certain aspects of the course, without completing the entire course. The requirements to earn a micro-credential are set forth by the granting body, which in this case would be the community college. NCCCS and the local colleges have recognized the value of a micro-credential; however, currently offerings are limited.

Focus group participants indicated that depending on the “door” through which a student enters, the local college works diligently to serve a student with I/DD in whatever program they may pursue, no matter whether the student is enrolled in curriculum, college and career readiness, or workforce development. Among the 58 community colleges, there is variability in policy and process for admission and participation in the college tracks. Interviews suggest that the departments within a local campus may have challenges with knowledge of each other’s requirements or offerings. An increase in the number of programs or courses granting micro-credentials at local colleges is not a guarantee that students with I/DD will end up accessing the courses unless there is planned training and understanding of the options among both the departments and programs within individual college.

The focus groups also recognized that developing micro-credentials that employers would recognize in relationship to job skills is a challenge due to limited development resources. In addition, any planning and development of the credential/micro-credential program would require market research with local employers to determine local and regional needs. If there is a decision to explore micro-credentials, efforts should be made to examine and leverage those developed in other states or those in existence across the college system. Taking a more centralized approach to the development or having the availability of reciprocity among colleges can increase availability across the state for all students.

¹⁵ (NCCCOM)

Funding Challenges

The NCCCS various funding streams to support the educational and training needs of individuals with ID/DD tends to be categorical, meaning that the funding has set requirements based upon the originating federal regulation or state legislation. Local revenues from counties vary in much the same way as county participation in other publicly funded programs. Tax base and priorities impact both their ability and desire to provide funding and various focus groups raised concerns about funding disparities across the campuses.

In reviewing the funding stream, CCR noted that most county funding supports plant operations and maintenance, capital outlay and capital improvement projects. In FY 2018-19, counties contributed \$630,756,998 to local community college budgets and of that total \$267,281,400 was allocated to the operating budget.¹⁶

Since this project began, NC has been faced with COVID-19 and the implications of the loss of jobs, increased unemployment, and the unprecedented rallying of resources to respond to COVID-19. The funding implications are not totally known at this point but there is reasonable certainty that there are state and county costs that will not be covered with the COVID-19 enhanced federal revenue. The unemployment and periods of closed businesses will negatively impact the state and local tax receipts while at the same time the demand for resources in schools, first responders and health care which will increase the need for appropriations beyond existing recurring budgets.

Based on the interviews by the college of administration and central office of Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) funding allocations limit innovation and impact enrollment by:

- The current FTE funding models makes it difficult for students with I/DD to be shared across programs as 'one owner' is required to draw down funding.
- Other barriers include limits on the amount of time one has to complete a program or class. These time constraints may be unrealistic for some students, may discourage participation and negatively impact outcome measures for MSG and FTE requirements.

The FTE is used to calculate how local funding will be distributed to the NCCCS. Curriculum programs earns one FTE for every 512 class hours, while continuing education classes earn one FTE for every 688 hours of scheduled class time. (Quinterno, 2019) This presents a challenge to the NCCCS, especially for I/DD programs, since the FTE is used to calculate future funding and can limit growth potential for I/DD programs. Another barrier is performance-based funding. Since the late 1990s, the General Assembly enacted legislation whereas the better the colleges perform, the higher the retention of the prior year state appropriation of funds. Certain programs require standardized testing or have specific time limitations for entrance and completion of the program. In some programs, modifications, or adaptations to required test may be made to accommodate students with disabilities. In other situations, accommodations may not be appropriate for the type of degree or certificate being sought or the timeline for completion of the program would be challenging for an individual with a disability. Depending on the type of revenue used to fund a program, an individual with I/DD may

¹⁶ (NCCCOMBUDGET)

present some additional challenges to meet established benchmarks and thus may be discouraged from entering the program.

The FTE funding approach is also a hinderance for part time students, which the I/DD population ultimately makes up a significant number of part-time students. This presents little motivation for the individual community colleges to place an emphasis on expanding I/DD programs, since funding could potentially be reduced, especially if a program is primarily serving part-time students.

The current earning of FTE revenues is based upon the assignment of students to a program or department within the local community college. If the enrollment is not adequate or does not appropriately fit the category, the FTE is not earned and thus the program or class may or may not be offered. This is a perceived barrier which discourages innovation and sustainability. The focus group interviews revealed that some programs have waitlist while other programs have low enrollment. Under enrollment may be addressed if broader definition, inclusive of development disability is included.

While the review of NCCCS has focused upon services for students with an intellectual disability, NC would benefit overall by utilizing the federal definition of a developmental disability (DD) which focuses more upon functionality than the cause of the disability which has occurred prior to the age of twenty-two (22). While there may be some attempts to already do so, it became apparent during the both the focus and system's review groups that many staff are using incomplete definitions and/or are not aware of the definition that currently exist. The federal definition of DD shifts the focus from labels, which can be stigmatizing and lead to assumptions or myths to a focus on functional limitation in three or more of seven areas.¹⁷

From college to college, discussions indicated there are variations in how funding policies and requirements are interpreted and implemented despite that the requirements are federal or are written in the state plans submitted and approved by the federal authority. It is not clear at this point in the study whether there are untapped flexibilities that could be applied and/or waivers that could be sought that would allow for expanded use of funds and/or modified outcomes.

Despite these unknown conditions, there are progressive programs in the NCCCS achieving good employment outcomes which would indicate that programs are accomplishing the measures or are using a combination of alternative funding such as grants and/or local allocations to fund successful programs. Some examples of success include:

- increasing access to Math /Reading Skills programs,
- implementing non-credential agricultural programs,
- offering culinary programs where students are uniquely supported to complete the SERV Safe Certification, and
- implementing student focused modifications in a hospitality program whose focus is on high-demand specific, local job market skills.

Integration of individuals with I/DD or programs serving those individuals into the broader campus community should be enhanced. Interviews and focus group participants acknowledge the lack of a clear vision or strategy to support inclusion of students with I/DD within the full college programs available. The lack of a centralized vision for serving and supporting individuals with I/DD, contributes to the inconsistencies previously noted,

¹⁷ (North Carolina General Statutes, 122C-3)

while acknowledging that a more cohesive vision does exist at some of the colleges. As a result, students at some colleges are more integrated into the overall college while other colleges are struggling to move away from previous, less inclusive legacy programs. Research supports and advocates/stakeholders have found greater success with program outcomes, increased student participation and more empowering of self-determination when programs occur in more inclusive environments with individual supports as needed. This can be a significant transition for many of the current programs and requires a true change management approach due to various factors that must be considered that include:

- staffing,
- breaking down stigma,
- program offerings,
- staff Inservice for best practices, and
- funding

To implement the more inclusive model, there must be an administrative structure which provides a path to move from the specialized legacy programs into other credential programs or to immediately access the regular community college program upon admission.

Recommendations

The recommendations are grounded in the strategic question we began with ‘What should the Community College System do expand the opportunities or students with I/DD in securing sustainable employment with NC employers across the state?’ These recommendations are derived from the findings of the environmental scan of existing programs, service mapping of the existing system, interviews with staff and focus groups, literature and research review, and utilizing a lens to support a framework of local service delivery.

The recommendations also include centralized statewide guidance while empowering local creativity and innovation that meets the unique geographic, cultural and job market of the colleges, recognizing that service and program delivery is local. The recommendations centered in the following areas:

- **Planning and development of educational components** that include programs which lead to a micro-credential, a credential and employment outcome within a year
- **Offering of training and educational components** that include improving employability skills, on the job training and offer internship/apprenticeships which include real job experiences.
- **Alignment of policy and procedures** that are required internally to the NCCCS. In addition, policy alignment is needed but not limited to, state agencies, such as: NCCCS, DHHS, Commerce, DPI, and the Public Schools Transitional Services.
- **Expand knowledge within the NCCCS and addresses cross departmental supports** within the individual colleges including but not limited to:
 - Best practices for teaching individuals and vocational training for individuals with I/DD.
 - Financial & benefits counseling
 - Assistive Technology

- Increased access, with supports, to credential & degree programs, including micro-credentials established by NCCCS
- Strategies and practices to increase orientation and integration into the college community to the greatest extent possible.
- **Increase needs assessment, marketing, and evaluation** to serve a broad array of individuals with developmental and other similar disabilities or learning challenges to assure adequate demand for new or existing programs.
- **Maximization and leveraging of Funding** should be available to support programs or models at all fifty-eight (58) community colleges.

Infrastructure at the NCCCS Office

In 2019, NCCCS Office took a positive step forward of creating a position dedicated to specialized I/DD programs and services. Efforts should be made to continue to develop NCCCS capacity to facilitate systematic processes of increasing integration of students with I/DD within the college campuses, maximizing evidence informed use of existing programs, and increasing opportunities for more hands-on work experiences. Resources are needed to ensure clear responsibility for future initiatives that include:

- Establish a unified vision and framework for serving individuals with I/DD at all fifty-eight (58) community colleges to follow. The framework should at the minimum:
 - Establish a common definition of employment within the college system and align when possible with other agencies that support and fund employment opportunities and whose recipients are subject to employment requirements to apply and maintain benefits or services. Benefits include Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), interventions and services through the home and community-based Medicaid waivers (Innovations Program or Community Alternatives Program for Disabled Adults – CAP-DA), LME/MCO state I/DD funds and VR programs.
 - Establish common performance and funding measures with standardized instructions for computing measures and outcomes. Align measures with FTE funding requirements. These measures should be reported quarterly or twice a year inclusive of a closed feedback loop from and to individual colleges and for the system at large.
 - Create and implement opportunities that recognize the inclusion of individuals into the college mainstream courses and programs while supporting their learning challenges.
- Realign and expand, as needed, the NCCCS Office structure to create ownership to support the implementation and replication of the framework, best practices, and shared experiences among designated staff in each community college. The structure includes:
 - Identify lead staff position within the central office and any existing regional positions
 - Identify lead staff at each community college
 - Define the role, responsibilities, and reporting structure of positions.

- Establish and implement a communication strategy with benchmarks, outcomes and deliverables identified
- Create an annual review and evaluation process.
- Create a cross agency coordinating committee. This committee should be representative of public and private organizations providing policy planning, advocacy and funding for services and supports for people with I/DD. The committee should:
 - Establish charter and membership, inclusive of individuals with decision making authority, subject matter expertise and ability to commit of resources.
 - Focus on competitive employment and sustainable employment as defined in the mutually agreed upon definition of employment.
 - Focus on policy development and best practice implementation that promotes recruitment and placement of students with I/DD in competitive job arrangements and other work options that align with the vision and established benchmarks.
 - Create a continuous improvement process to periodically examine and act on quality measure results including the ability to modify policy, practices and program offerings that support the ever-changing field of services and supports of individuals.
 - Identify and agree upon the necessary Legislative, contractual or rule authority to establish such a group that will have ability to plan and implement identified strategies.
- Establish and communicate policy with clear expectations and boundaries for colleges to allow for innovation and flexibility while maintaining fidelity to the vision and performance benchmarking and measures. Policies to be considered include:
 - Career advising policy
 - Student success plans
 - Graduation or credential requirements
 - FTE administration and benchmarking
 - Definition of work and defining success
 - Agency coordinating committee
 - Program design based on job market analysis and design for programs to meet the needs. This also includes recognition that individuals with I/DD can master competitive employment in some degree through active analysis of realistic jobs, sharing of jobs and job pairing, and instruction that supports rather than accepting the thoughts of barriers and functioning limitations.
 - Standardized curriculum
 - Establishing a point of entry and process for encouraging integration
 - Develop an enrollment marketing plan. The marketing plan at a minimum should include high school students with I/DD and school staff and parents with youth and young adults with I/DD from ages fourteen (14) to twenty-two (22).
 - Utilize NCCARE360, Aunt Bertha and any additional referral sources as a centralized point of resource and referral for families and individuals to receive basic information about the community college system.
 - Address the negative ‘myths’ related to the abilities of students with I/DD to live, learn, work, and play in their community of choice.

- Expand partnerships with VR with a goal of increasing the employer network for the current legacy programs to achieve post-secondary competitive employment outcomes, by:
 - Developing a data tracking system across agencies for former students and their employment status based on the adopted employment definition.
 - Assuring adequate staffing with regional employment networks.
 - Creating a job coaching (longer term than the VR model) program.
 - Increasing visibility of community college representatives on the twenty-three (23) Workforce boards.
 - Increasing the number of supportive employment programs and job coaches across the state.

Programmatic

Segregated or isolated programs designed only for I/DD tend to add stigma and isolate individuals from further life learning and skill development. Other individuals who have other cognitive or academic challenges may benefit with the specialized techniques and extra support used for individuals with I/DD. Utilizing the established framework outlined above, communicate the base curriculum that each college or partnering arrangement will provide for individuals with I/DD. This curriculum should be based upon best practices (soft and hard skills) that allow students to obtain the necessary employment-focused skills required by the local employment market analysis. Specific actions include:

- Evaluating the current model elements and establish wider ‘curbs’ to address its challenges to enhance programming and outcomes:
 - Define the programmatic outcomes and data points to be part of the continuous improvement process
 - Ensure that the employer marketing is continuously surveyed, analyzed and use to ensure that programs is aligned with their needs.
- Implementing a flexible program model that will allow for feedback to be implemented timely and with ease:
 - Seek training opportunities for staff which broadens expertise across the college.
 - Begin expanding the student population from one primarily of students with an intellectual disability by adopting the federal definition of a developmental disability which is functionally based.
 - Incorporate on the job learning, whether through apprenticeships and/or job sampling.
 - Connect staff to external resources such as NTACT and Think College to ensure staying current with best practices.
 - Maximizing the sharing of model programs that exist across the system which have developed progressive programs. Examples across the system include:
 - Focusing on increasing student access to such areas as Math Skills/Reading Skills, ABE 1 level (2nd grade or below), hands on activities at agricultural level (non-credential program), culinary program (working on partner engagement).
 - Supporting students with I/DD to become ServSafe® Certified as part of the culinary option (Federal grant funding covers the cost).

- Establishing a credential or “micro-credential program” that individuals with I/DD can receive either through partnerships or within the college system. Some colleges have already begun to explore this option. This could be a great opportunity to explore grant funding and create a pilot program, partnering with the Medicaid Agency to explore administrative funding for the collection and analysis data examining:
 - The trending of the Medicaid spending for individuals in the pilot in comparison to those not enrolled
 - Barriers to accessing the Medicaid benefit that create whole person care
 - Barriers to addressing social determinants of health
 - The role of Medicaid in obtaining post-secondary training and long term supports.
- Expanding and defining the ‘curbs’ of how money is earned/allocated across the program enabling adjustments based upon regional or geographic employment needs, local opportunities or internal structural supports by each community that includes:
 - Identify the national evidence informed models which have been developed or are developing credential programs and modify and/or add requirements to curriculum to be used across the college systems.
 - Explore credential programs which have, based upon literature review, have led to a broader type of programs that may be required to increase the number of pathways which lead to employment.
 - Address issues with the FTE funding model which makes it difficult for students with I/DD to be shared across programs as ‘one owner’ is required.
- Establishing, in collaboration with DPI and VR, a consistent, statewide transition program with students in middle and high schools to address the transition protocol, and the role and opportunities within the community colleges for implementation among all the local community colleges.
- Through the collaborative relationship with NC Medicaid, foster discussions, and action steps for:
 - Modifying service definitions and administrative funding across agencies to focus on integrated programs, supported employment and job training. Utilize the Developmental Disability Definition as defined in NC General Statutes 122c-3 12a.
 - Expanding peer support for students in college.
 - Requiring the Individualized Service Plan (ISP) to address employment options and supports with a work goal of competitive employment, as appropriate.
 - Exploring alternative payment options for personal outcome of meaningful employment as research shows that “work” decreases the reliance on Medicaid.
 - Including access to community college system as a value-based purchasing outcome.
 - Maximization of NC Health Insurance Program (NCHIP) as an incentive to work.
 - Establishing funding options for transitional services from school to post-secondary opportunities.

Funding

The complexity of funding sources and the local governance in college budgeting, must be considered when establishing base curriculums and programs for individuals. Funding and revenue should also be strongly rooted in data analytics. Continue the analysis of all funding streams across the college system used to support students with I/DD. To the extent that the data is available, this analysis should include the I/DD students who benefited from the expenditure, how the funding was used, what were the outcomes achieved and what design or realignment is needed to potentially enhance or improve the desired outcome of increasing the number of students served who graduate or leave the program with employment, specifically:

- Establish the base curriculum and credential/micro-credential programs collectively referred to as “the model(s)” and complete the following:
 - Examine all funding or revenue streams that can be used and/or modified to support and sustain the model(s).
 - In conjunction with Division of Health Benefits (Medicaid) amend Medicaid service definitions to broadly support employment for individuals. Most individuals with I/DD receive Medicaid and/or are eligible for other state/federal funding.
 - Establish the use of Medicaid administrative funding with NCCCS to address shared vision, coordination of access to the Medicaid benefit and leverage of technical expertise in the use of Medicaid funding to promote outreach and education for all categories of Medicaid eligibility including but not limited to Ticket to Work and Health Insurance Premium Program (HIPPP).
 - Examine how current funding can be leveraged across more colleges.
 - Identify the availability of other federal/state funding. (VR, Medicaid, LME/MCOs, Workforce Development Boards) for not only start up but for ongoing sustainability of the services offered.
 - Convene an advanced funding mapping exercise focused on defining and ‘assigning’ program, funding, implementation, and outcome responsibility for the target population in relationship to accessing post-secondary education and training focused on sustainable employment.
 - Create the sustainable funding model with budget forecasting programming that supports a foundational program offered by each college, while encouraging a broader funding allocation to address community markets.

Conclusion

Over the past five (5) months, Cansler Collaborative Resources has:

- engaged with staff across the NC Community College System and its many partners/stakeholders
- conducted an environmental scan of resources and best practices
- Engaged in person to person interactions including four (4) focus groups, individual meetings, and conference calls
- convening of NCCCS partners to complete a system mapping exercise.

We appreciate the participation and engagement from each one of the approximately one hundred (100) plus individuals who made time and contributed their expertise to this project

Since the onset of this project, COVID-19 has impacted all aspects of where we live, learn, work and play. The impact is still being evaluated as we continue to be in the mist of reopening. Even before the publication of the impact, anecdotally we know that the community college enrollment and models of operation were greatly altered and availability of funding for both NCCCS and DHHS will be impacted for various reasons. Once the impact is fully recognized, additional review and prioritization of the recommendations is advised.

The ultimate take-away is that more individuals with I/DD will benefit from attending their local community college for post-secondary trainings and certifications to secure sustainable employment. NCCCS can build off existing program which have dedicated and professional staff to increase enrollment, funding, and resources, specifically by:

- multiple means or ways of increasing the number of students with I/DD who secure employment upon leaving the community college through increased collaborations
- potential sources of funding to support more students in attending community colleges
- potential resources which could be tapped to stand-up new programs and to expand programs to serve students with a developmental disability across the individual colleges in more inclusive settings
- need to seek additional funds to leverage other potential funding sources

This additional analysis will require a combination of:

- staff resources
- financial resources
- policy & procedural changes, or revisions
- and internal supports & structural changes.

We started with a strategic question: “*What should the NCCCS do to expand the opportunities for adults with I/DD in securing sustainable employment with NC employers across the state?*” The recommendations provide a guide to the actions needed to answer this question. The objectives are achievable and will result in more students with I/DD being competitively employed in sustainable jobs across North Carolina.

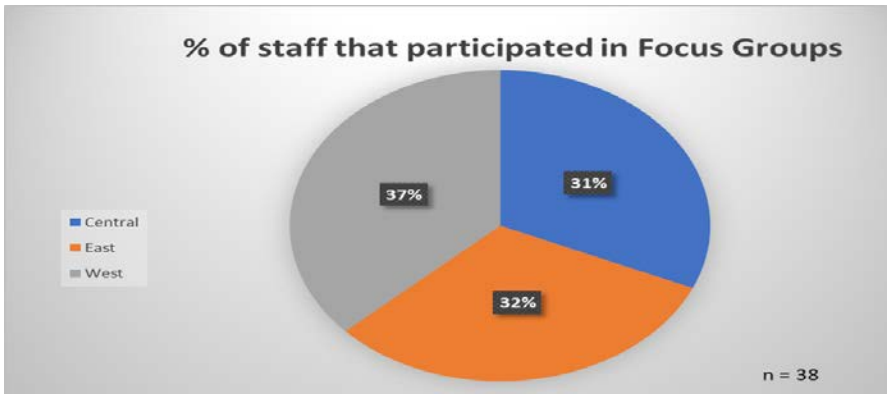
Again, CCR appreciates the support, responsiveness, and engagement of the NCCCS staff, its partners, and its stakeholders.

REMAINDER OF PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

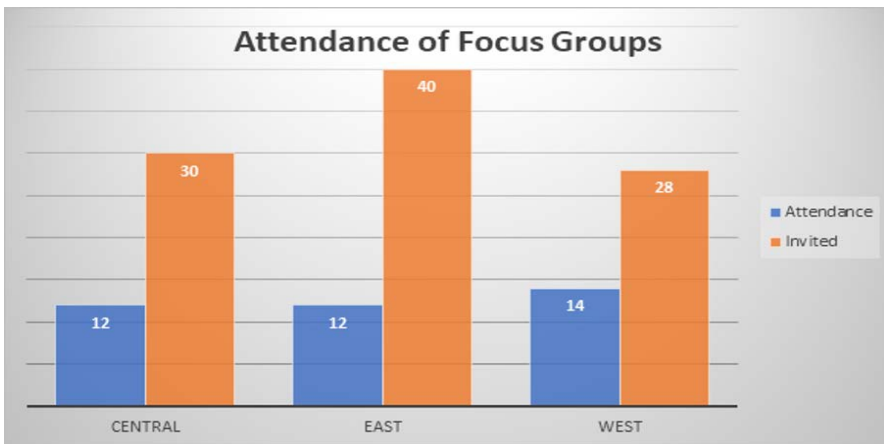
Attachments

REMAINDER OF PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

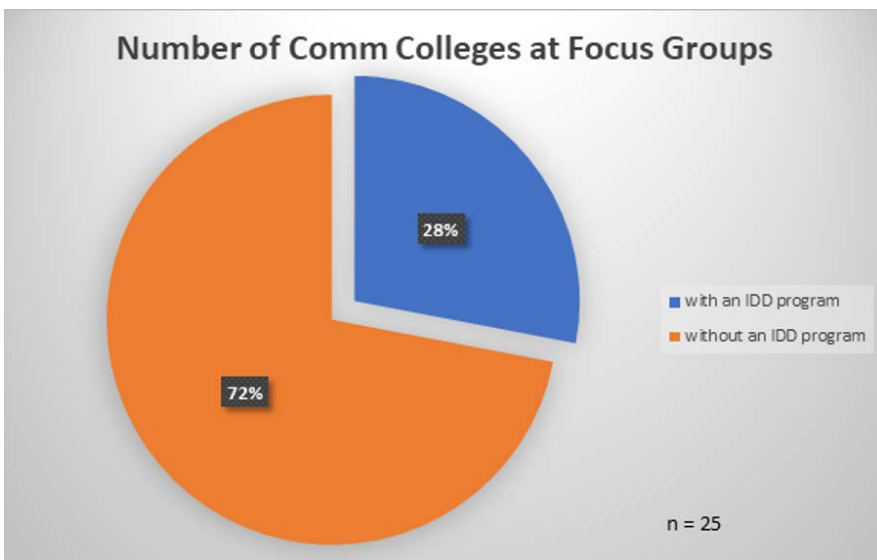
Attachment A: Demographic Data for NCCCS Focus Groups



Thirty-eight (38) individuals participated in the focus groups.
 -14 Reps for Western NC
 -12 Reps for Central NC
 -12 Reps for Eastern NC



Ninety-eight (98) local community college individuals were invited to participate in a focus group,
 -40% of Central Invitees participated
 -30% of Eastern Invitees participated
 -50% of Western Invitees participated



Overall, twenty-five (25) local Community Colleges participated in a focus group,
 Some colleges had more than one participant.
 Seventy-two percent (72%) of those in attendance did not have an identified I/DD program per information provided by the NCCCS.

Attachment B1: System Mapping

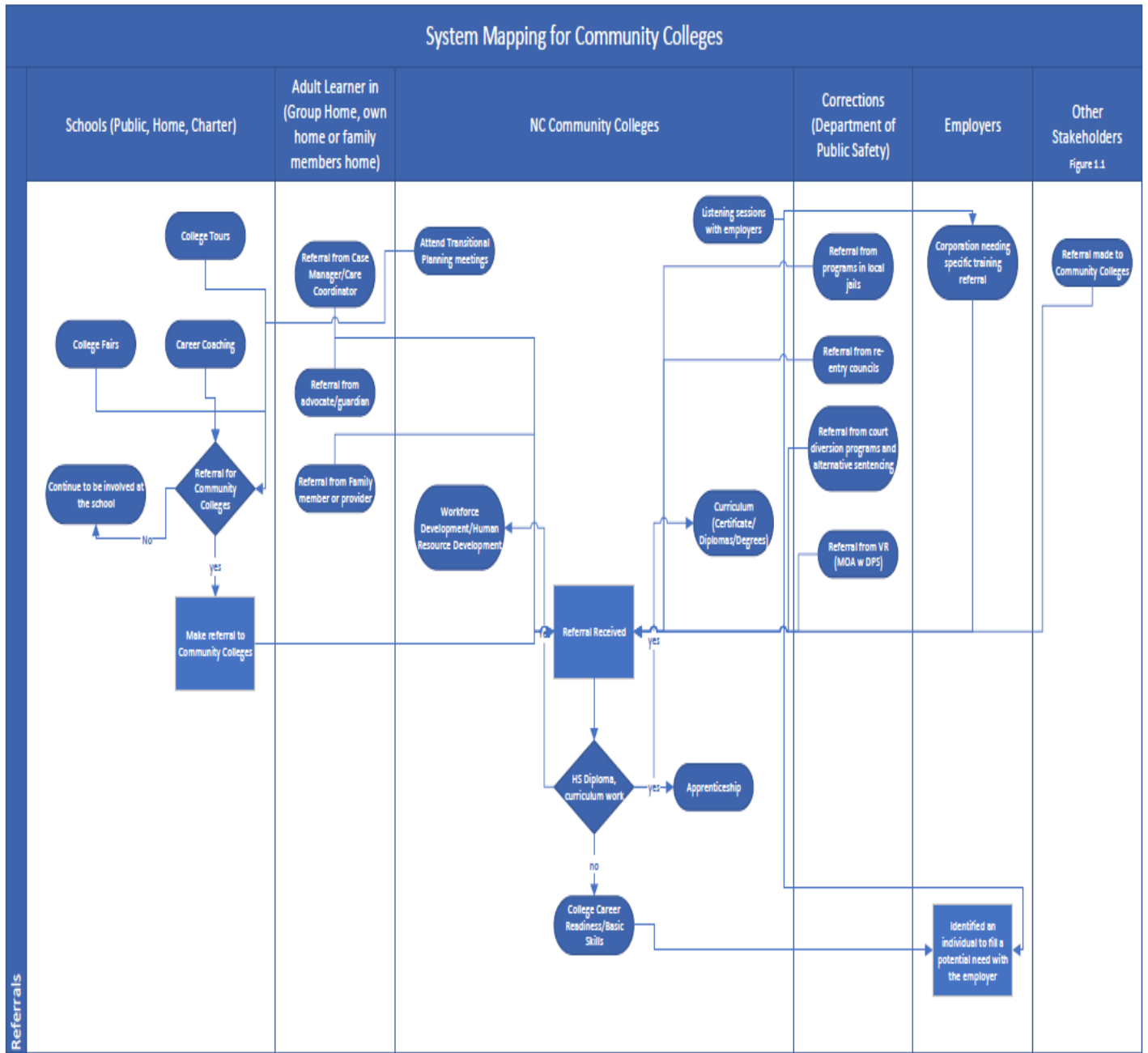
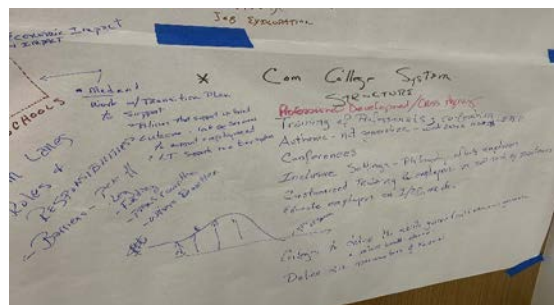
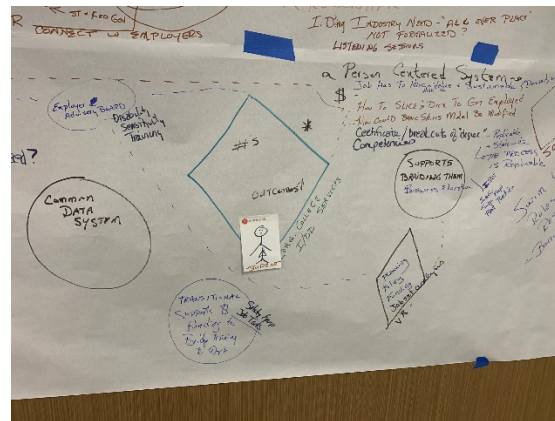
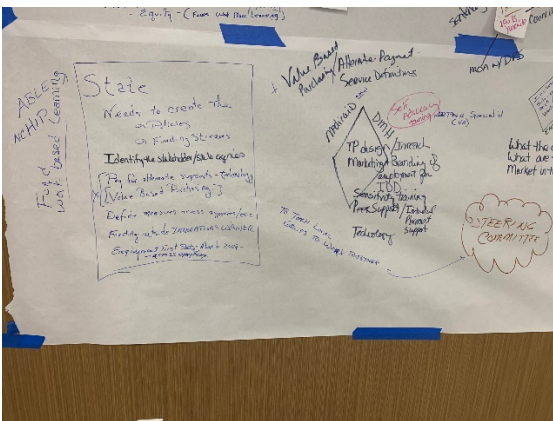
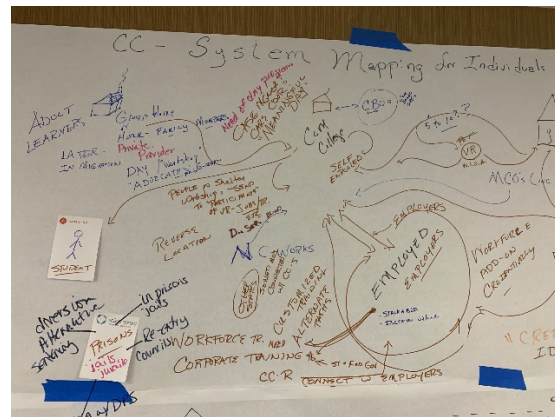
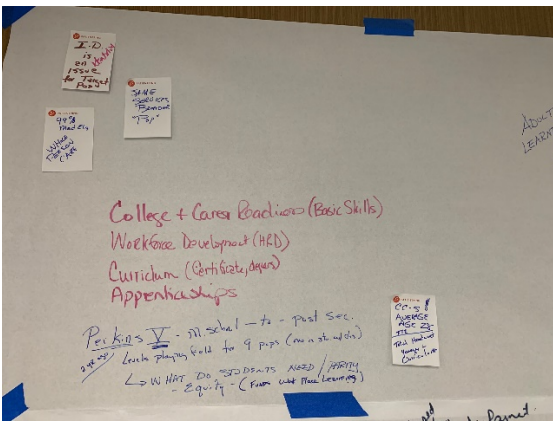
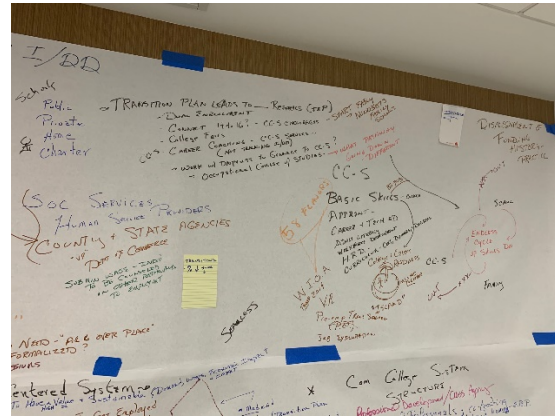


Figure
 1.1 includes self-refer, employed individuals, employers, Community Based Organizations, NC Works, Managed Care Organizations, Social Services, County and State Agencies (ex. Voc Rehab)

Attachment B2: System Mapping: Pictures



Attachment B3: System Mapping: Recommendations Notes

- Services need to start with family/individual as early as possible for best results
- Desire to explore benefits of having one credentialing body Add to Tailored plan design, people in shelter workshops... community colleges could offer training to increase the probability of achieving a competitive job
- What do the employers need?
 - What are the jobs?
- Would like a Common referral system – potential for NCCARE360
- NC Community College Goals:
 - more students enrolled
 - better outcomes achieved
- need a market analysis by area to identify potential population
- Pathway to certification needs to be documented to better understand barriers
- Potentially look at the Basic Skills Plus model and how it might benefit this population.
- Review training for staff... how do we ensure competencies in providing supports to this population?
- Potential role for Steering Committee with a charter, goals, and outcomes
- Identify conferences that might be beneficial to stay current, network and learn from others
- Inclusive settings – philosophy of the employers
- State Agencies need to create policies that support the outcome (want the community colleges to be a viable resource for individuals with I/DD to get jobs) funding will also be needed
- Competencies need in this area need to be documented
- Enhance job site opportunities Seek opportunities to replicate best practices across and statewide system
- Advisory board to bring employers to the table, to make programs work
- Medicaid/DMH: marketing and branding of employment for I/DD
 - Sensitivity training
 - Peer Support
 - IPS (Individualized placement and services)
- VR: Business education
- Medicaid:
 - Look at service definitions
 - Alternative payments
 - Value Based Purchasing
- Transitional services
- Multi-agency, cross developmental
- Perkins 5 (school to post-secondary)
 - What do students need/parity?
 - 9 populations
- NC Able – can potentially be used for funding for individuals
- North Carolina Health Insurance Premium Payment Program (NCHIPP) – who is eligible, what services are covered and how do we use opportunities to benefit students (mynchipp.com)
- Work base learning (EBP)
 - Set goals such as every student to have at least 1 experience before they leave high school (job shadowing, apprenticeship)
 - Review Florida model
 - Need adequate funding to support infrastructure and administrative needs
- Need Marketing/Branding strategy for families and potential students so they know what we offer
- Need training to better understand and respect self-advocacy
 - Employment First (2019) – North Carolina passed its resolution in 2019...need better understanding of their goals and how our system can get plugged in.

Attachment C: Focus Groups Attendee List by Community College

Community College	Region	Attended
Asheville-Buncombe Technical CC	West	Yes
Asheville-Buncombe Technical CC	West	Yes
Blue Ridge CC	West	Yes
Blue Ridge CC	West	Yes
Caldwell CC & TI	West	Yes
Catawba Valley CC	West	Yes
Craven CC (Intrium)	East	Yes
Davidson County CC	Central	Yes
Guilford TCC	Central	Yes
Lenoir CC	East	Yes
Martin CC	East	Yes
Mayland CC	West	Yes
Mitchell CC	Central	Yes
Montgomery CC	Central	Yes
Nash CC	East	Yes
Pamlico CC	East	Yes
Pitt CC	East	Yes
Reading Connections, Inc.	Central	Yes
Rowan-Cabarrus CC	West	Yes
Rowan-Cabarrus CC	West	Yes
South Piedmont CC	Central	Yes
Wake Tech CC	Central	Yes
Western Piedmont CC	West	Yes
Wilkes CC	West	Yes
Wilson CC	East	Yes
YMCA of Northwest NC	Central	Yes

Attachment D: NCCCS Post-Secondary Education Options for Students with I/DD

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Alamance CC	Career College	30+ (2 cohorts)	Yes	Yes	2-year integrative post-secondary certificate program. Provides foundation for transitioning into career or further coursework. Develops reading, math, and computer skills through Basic Skills classes. Hands-on practicum experience in: Automotive Assistant, Health & Public Services Assistant, Greenhouse/Nursery Assistant, and Animal Husbandry Program. Practicum section taught by curriculum instructors.
Alamance CC	ABLE	40 - 50	Yes		Open entry classes to support transition of those with learning difficulties or challenges to Academic and Career program, or Career College. Project-based and service-learning opportunities. Develops career, reading, math, and computer skills through Basic Skills classes. Hands on experience with Coffee Cart (ABLE to Table), Pillows with a Purpose, and other project-based learning. Opportunities to navigate public transit and the community.
Haywood CC	Career College	8-10	Yes	Yes	2-year year integrative post-secondary certificate program. Provides foundation for transitioning into career or further coursework. Develops reading, math, and computer skills through Basic Skills classes. Hands-on experience in Horticulture. Integrates business and entrepreneurship skills as well as computer skills.

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
AB Tech CC Central Piedmont CC Robeson CC Southwestern CC	Project Search	8-12	Yes	Yes	<p>Combined education and internship program. Prepares students for competitive employment in the community. Work in high-status organizations and learn high-demand skill sets such as hospital settings with a variety of work opportunities. Work towards becoming more independent in areas such as employment, transportation, and daily living skills. Receive Basic Skills instruction at the employment site.</p> <p>Note: Project SEARCH for AB Tech runs from Sept. – June and is focused on careers with Healthcare employers.</p>
Cape Fear CC	Essentials Program	8-12	Yes	Yes	<p>The Essentials Program offers free academic and career readiness classes to those who function at or below the 8th grade level and who wish to improve their reading, writing, math, and computer literacy skills. This two-year program allows students the chance to enroll in multiple pathways. Pathways have included: hospitality and tourism, computer basics, and healthcare basics.</p>

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Wake Tech CC, Central Piedmont CC, Pitt CC AB Tech	T-STEP	8-10	Yes	Yes	The TEACCH School Transition to Employment and Postsecondary Education Program (T-STEP) was developed to support transition to employment and/or postsecondary education settings for adolescents and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The T-Step covers six transition skills modules grouped into three intervention areas; organization and executive function skills, emotion regulation skills, and social skills. Additionally, students practice these skills on a weekly basis at a volunteer internship site. Students also receive individual career counseling, higher education counseling, and self-advocacy counseling.
Pitt CC	Career Academy	45	Yes	Yes	This program provides students who have learning difficulties and/or challenges the opportunity to explore and develop job skills, career choices, academics in career contexts, and goals and objectives for job attainment. Career Modules: Students receive instruction and hands-on experiences in each module. Modules include horticulture, grounds maintenance & landscaping, housekeeping, building maintenance & cleaning, food preparation & service, photography, floral design, manufacturing, customer skills and retail and sales, biotechnology, sewing and others according to student interest and job market. Offer 6-week pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship with East Voc. Center each semester.

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Mayland CC	Work Skills Academy & Life Skills	8	No		Work Skills Academy is focused on assisting adult learners in mastering the skills needed for successful employment. Course content is employment-focused, including both academic and soft skills. Transition Goals: Employment, greater independence, economic self-sufficiency, community involvement, access to resources, further educational opportunities. Life Skills classes are content standards-based and focus on employability skills and basic skills attainment.
College of the Albemarle	A.B.E.T.O. Adult Basic Education Transitional Opportunities	15	No		The A.B.E.T.O. program is designed to provide a learning experience for college-aged students with intellectual learning disabilities. This program is designed to transform lives in an accessible, supportive environment that develops skills needed to transition into a career pathway. The program focuses on personal development, self-determination, and developing skills related to employment.
Cleveland CC	ConneXions	20 - 25	No	Yes	ConneXions is a one- or two-year program designed to prepare students for entry-level employment. This program collaborates with Cleveland County Schools and Cleveland CC. ConneXions focuses on developing entry level work skills through different courses offered each semester. Courses offered include General Maintenance, Customer Service, Employee Development I, Employee Development II, and Child Day Care.

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Craven CC	Transitions Academy	15	Yes	Yes	<p>The Transitions Academy is designed for students with mild disabilities (typically graduates of OCS programs from area high schools) who receive instruction to improve reading, writing, math, technology, and soft skills in the context of various career modules (2 per semester) so they are better prepared for “transitioning” to other post-secondary education, workforce development certificates, or employment opportunities. Modules include hands on learning with greenhouse/horticulture, childcare/simulated infants, health programs (CPR cert, blood pressure, and other skills working with staff/students in curriculum health programs), carpentry, and future hospitality/food service in new VOLT center.</p>
Guilford Tech	POWER Pathways	15-20	Yes	Yes	<p>Food Service Program: This program is designed to provide students with special needs the skills necessary to gain employment or volunteer in the Culinary and Food Supply Industry.</p> <p>Some Topics include: Principles of basic cookery, basic menu and recipe planning, intro to basic baking, basic knife skills, and cooking methods, resume preparation, and interviewing techniques. Students attend a contextualized reading and math class, an HRD employability skills class, and a Food Services Sanitation and Safety class to prepare for the ServSafe®® Food Handler’s Certification test.</p>

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Wake Tech CC	Pathfinder Career Exploration Program	100	No	Yes	2-year program consisting of 6 employability skills-focused cohorts for students with disabilities to complete. The cohorts include: Horticulture & Landscaping, Healthcare, Animal Care/Pet Retail, Business/Customer Service, Food Service/Culinary, and Technology. Career Pathways also offered (fee based) including Hospitality and Barista & Café Training where students can earn nationally recognized credentials.
Brunswick Community College	Brunswick Interagency Program	120	No		BIP provides adult basic education and supported employment services to students diagnosed with I/DD living in Brunswick County. Students can earn the national career readiness certification while improving literacy, money management, personal advocacy, and use of technology. Students are provided with paid transitional crew experience through yard maintenance, custodial, and food preparation. This program also holds the Project Search license in Brunswick County and provides job coaching for high school seniors diagnosed with I/DD.

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Fayetteville Technical CC	Accessing Career Education A.C. E	8 -12	Yes	Yes	The A.C.E program offers a three-part approach to academic and career development. It combines academics with employability skills and vocational training. Part I: Academic Skills, participants attend Adult Basic Education classes in reading, writing, and math. Part II: Employability Skills, participants attend an employability class with emphasizes developing employability skills, career exploration, effective communication skills and critical thinking skills. Part III: Career Training in automotive detailing and parts counter. Future pathway will be in food service and Horticulture.
Nash CC	Foundational Adult Basic Education	8 - 12	Yes	Yes	This program prepares students with mild intellectual disabilities to transition into college or work. Through career pathways, students are eligible to earn a certificate showing skills mastered. Students can pursue pathways in hospitality and food services, grounds maintenance, environmental services, and retail sales.
AB Tech	Hospitality Pipeline	8 - 10	Yes	Yes	The Hospitality Pipeline is an internship program for individuals in the community who have low levels of literacy and/or disabilities. The integrated education and training program prepare individuals for jobs in the Asheville hospitality and tourism industry. The partners, A-B Tech, Goodwill, the Biltmore Company, and Biltmore Farms work together to increase the reliable workforce. Students participate in academic instruction focusing on workplace skill development, professionalism, and hospitality-specific training.

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Rowan-Cabarrus Community College	SOAR (Skills, Opportunities, Awareness, Readiness)	145	Yes	Yes	This program is specifically designed for adults with intellectual disabilities or those with traumatic brain injuries. The focus of the program is to promote basic literacy skill development and workplace skill development. Students will gain practicum experience in a variety of partnerships with local businesses within the community. Our partnerships include The Budd Group, Mean Mug Coffee Incorporated, Morgan Ridge Vineyards, The Rail Walk, Meals on Wheels, and The Habitat for Humanity. Upon completion of the program each student receives a Certificate of Completion, a letter of recommendation, and a professionally built resume documenting their hours of practicum experiences.
Lenoir Community College	G.O.A.L.S. (Gaining Occupational and Life Skills)	50	Yes	Yes	The G.O.A.L.S. program provides students with a successful transition to employment through engaging instruction, project-based learning, and the development of workplace skills necessary for employment. Other activities are offered on campus to give students an opportunity to engage in campus life as well as in the community.
Davidson County Community College	Occupational Network	16-18	No	No	The Occupational Network class provides students who are graduates from the OCS programs in our service area high schools the opportunity to improve their reading, math, and language skills. Emphasis is placed on computer literacy, career exploration, and employability skills. The goal is to transition students to curriculum, continuing education, or work.

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Vance Granville CC	Community Workforce Solutions (CWS)	50-60	Yes	No	Our program partners with CWS which is a work-oriented facility. Through our partnership, individuals are equipped with work readiness skills such as; improving workplace reading, workplace safety, functional math, and workplace social interaction.
Edgecombe Community College	Adult Basic Education I	@18	No Strategic planning stage	No	Educational programming includes the following basic skill areas, vocational academic skills, life skills, and social skills. These educational opportunities enable our students with disabilities to become more independent and self-directing to benefit from occupational training, and to acquire skills to meet and manage community, obligations, social interactions, and personal adult responsibilities. The program has strategic plans to develop ABE I transitional pathways in the areas of grounds maintenance & landscaping, housekeeping, building maintenance & cleaning, business/customer service, and office supply.
South Piedmont CC	Pet Care Academy	6-12 per semester	Yes	Yes	The Pet Care Academy will be offered for the first time fall semester 2020. The Academy consist of 3 courses that support each other: Adult Basic Skills Foundations, Continuing Education ANS 3100 Pet Care: Retail, and Human Resource Development Resumes and Job Searching Skills. The practicum portion of the Academy will be taught in a partnering animal hospital.

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Randolph CC	ABLE (Adult Basic Lifeskills Education)	107	None	NO	<p>The Adult Basic Life skills Education Program (ABLE) focuses on helping individuals with intellectual disabilities become as independent and self-directed as possible through acquiring basic and life skills needed to function successfully in daily living. Students also learn job training skills in a greenhouse program, called "Miracle Works." The greenhouse program provides life skills, marketable job training through horticultural therapy, as well as all aspects of abilities that will transfer to other jobs prospects and help them gain success.</p>

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Randolph Community College	Career College	5-10	Yes	Yes	<p>Career College is a program for students with disabilities that allows participants to earn a certificate in the Hospitality and Tourism Pathway. The Hospitality and Tourism certificate is designed to give students a foundation in tourism and hospitality services over the course of one semester. The program prepares students for entry-level positions in a variety of hospitality settings, including in food services, tourism, travel, and hotel settings. The students can develop reading, math, and computer skills along with participation in a hands-on practicum experience within their program of study. Classes are offered on campus Monday-Thursday. Additionally, resume writing, interview techniques, and job search strategies are taught, so that the participant will find success when searching for employment.</p>
Carteret CC	Adult Basic Education	25-30	No	Yes	<p>In this program, students develop reading, language arts, math, and computer skills through Basic Skills classes. Students also participate in the Conover Online Program. The Workplace Readiness program consists of Job Readiness Skills, Job Seeking Skills, and Job Keeping Skills. When students complete a lesson, they receive a certificate. Several of our students work at local restaurants and several volunteer at the Maritime Museum and various food pantry operations in the county.</p>

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Halifax CC	Students with Disabilities	Approx. 20	Pending: Hospitality	Yes	This program provides instruction to help prepare students to transition to work or college. For instance, classes are provided to strengthen reading, writing, math, social, communication, and technology skills. Students can receive a certificate which recognizes various accomplishments. Further, students utilize local transportation to attend classes which improves social skills, communication skills and one's overall independence. Pending: Hospitality Career Pathways which would concentrate on developing the necessary skills to work in hospitality settings which are very popular in our service area.
Roanoke-Chowan CC	L4L Literacy for Life	30-35	No		Literacy for Life focuses on career readiness skills (interviews, resumes, etc.), financial literacy (W-4s, bank accounts, etc.), soft skills, health literacy skills, and job safety skills. Content is both academic and work-based learning.

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Wilkes CC	Career Step	6-12	As Available	In-House Certificate and recognition at annual graduation ceremony. If they complete a Continuing Education or Curriculum program, they receive a certificate.	Career Step is a tuition free program designed primarily for students with an occupational diploma, high school IEP or who have intellectual challenges or disabilities. The program leads students on a step-by-step journey through basic academics, employability skills, workplace readiness, and concludes with hands-on training for a chosen career pathway. Students will have an opportunity for a pre-apprenticeship or internship, as available, in their pathway through Continuing Education or Curriculum certificate programs.
Coastal Carolina CC	Career and Life Skills	8-10		Yes	Coastal's CCR curriculum is a contextualized, project-based learning program. We collaborate with local businesses to create an exceptional post-secondary experience for the students enrolled in the Career and Life Skills classes. To prepare our students for the workplace, we have implemented academics with employability skills that include horticulture and landscaping, animal care and pet retail, childcare and culinary. Presently, our students are working with the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK). With their partnership, the students have planted a pollinator garden and they are actively involved in helping to maintain the College's greenhouse. Future pathways will focus on independent living skills. These skills include classes in technology, budgeting, using public transportation, and soft skills.

Community College(s)	Program	Number of Students per year	Practicum Experience	Certificate	Description
Southeastern CC	Basic Skills ABE	50	Yes	Yes	This program prepares students with mild intellectual disabilities to transition into college or work. A student may enroll in a career pathway of their choice. Completion of the program students will earn a certificate showing they have mastered the competencies in that pathway. The pathways include in-home aide, welding, and basic culinary.

REMAINDER OF PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Attachment E: Focus Group notes

Community College Project FY 2020: What should the Community College System do to increase the number of adults with I/DD in securing sustainable employment with NC employers across the state?

Focus Groups December 2019: Key Points	Highlighted Points/Takeaways
<p>What can we do to increase the numbers of individuals with DD to be employed? Address Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Measures – how you measure progress is a barrier because of the individuals seeking employment? Curriculum does not exist right now, one college using Comp Ed curriculum because nothing else out there. And some research on curriculums has been. done research. • Everyone on the same page – no consistency across the levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need a vision – want the same goal for individuals with disabilities ○ MSG pay people – because of this, some community colleges cut this off because of performance based scoring because it impacts financially for staff and for community college ○ Not everyone in Administration has the same vision • Greater independence may be a little better in the short term (local quilting group, transportation, financial readiness, etc.) • Does not want “standardized” programs – want freedom for local providers/community colleges, need flexibility based on community needs • Current definition of “credit” complicates our work • Need a process to measure student growth over a longer period need recognition for gains over time • Some measures focus on the wrong thing <p>Current performance measures incentivize student selection based on who has the probability to succeed. Review Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • program specific...no cross-program funding • Complicated, more so for this population • Process measures, student progress and student attendance are the primary ways funding is earned • No funding available to support community engagement Conflicts often exist regarding what is best for the students and best community college, thus programs are eliminated because of this Need to talk to the MCO’s about this – how the cost is handled at the provider level. • FTE funding cuts • Criteria for funding often a barrier and grant driven <p>Administration Role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going around looking for “hidden” comp ed offices – felt like this was punitive • Need a consistent vision for programming from administration • Administration needs to support these [initiatives] because of the MSG requirements, if no support from administration, this will not be successful; 	<p>Performance Measures – how you measure progress is a barrier because of the individuals seeking employment? Curriculum does not exist right now, one college using Comp Ed curriculum because nothing else out there. Page (AB Tech) has done research.</p> <p>Everyone on the same page – no consistency across the levels. Need a vision – want the same goal for individuals with disabilities MSG pay people – because of this, some community colleges cut this off because of performance based scoring because it impacts financially for staff and for community college Not everyone at administration has the same vision</p>

<p>Encourage Innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins at the State Level – local community colleges need permission to innovate and evaluate. Successes should be scaled to other locations and would need marketing support. <p>Staff Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need benefits counseling training • Soft skills training is important (example socialization) but doing so can negatively impact timely completion of program goals and securing sustainable employment. • Curriculum development, with sub-credentials within other community college programs <p>Transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some transportation programs having funding to enable students to attend, others do not. • Students need reliable, affordable transportation. New ideas are needed to address this need; not enough workable options. Options must vary from area to area based on what is available. 	
--	--

REMAINDER OF PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Central Focus Group Notes	Western Focus Group Notes	Eastern Focus Group Notes	Highlighted Points/ Takeaways
<p>Occupational network (still in the pilot stage.... phase 2 is underway) class is intended for students who need additional supports to be successful...evaluate and move students along as they are able</p> <p>RISE...reinforced instruction students....state initiative....to move students in and out of gateway Math and English quicker....if a student has been out for 10 or more years...they have to start at RISE....otherwise placement is from GPA....doesn't differ from Diploma and/or GED etc.</p> <p>Status QUO is changing due to RISE...right now we are offering an Occupational Network....</p> <p>We looked at animal care, but we did not have the interest.... zoo and aquarium science have interest</p> <p>We have manufacturing and retail...we are limited...</p> <p>We look at the students independently....they want the socialization....even when they finish they still come back...I know these students since they were early elementary...they want to be successful....I have some students who don't want to move into curriculum</p> <p>Our career coach does go into the classroom.</p>	<p>Hospitality Pipeline, Project Search, Pre and Post Test, Modified Training (Adults DD or low levels of literacy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 7 out of 8 hospitality had jobs – paid internship • Project Search – not paid internship <p>One college – 100 individuals at the AD level, does not require a Psych Evaluation. If someone needs supports or accommodations, may need to go through support services</p> <p>Transition from Comp Ed to current format has been challenging</p> <p>High School Equivalency (HSE) seeking GED program, not necessarily employment, but may look to move that program to that.</p> <p>T-Step program launching, part of UNC program (higher level) transition level for High School to Colleges (Autism)</p>	<p>VR services can be a barrier...we a common understanding of program requirements and rules</p> <p>It is a policy decision to decide who you can and cannot serve...there are CC where you cannot get into the door because you cannot “pass” to get in the door...</p> <p>We must be able to help students based on the standards of the CC system and if you cannot take a test...how do we determine how to serve you...</p> <p>“I have nothing protecting me when I say you are not ready for my class/program”</p> <p>Some are piloting RISE and others are getting ready</p> <p>We need more conversations with VRmeaningful conversations....they have so much turnover...they may commit to somethings and then are unable to follow through or the person that committed is no longer there....they have great resources to serve through the age of 24 and we need to be able to tap into that.</p> <p>LEA...we need stronger partnership...some have a good transitional planning and others have no transition...we do not participate in IEPs...but question whether that would be helpful since individuals must self-identify...</p> <p>Advisory Board meetings can be poorly attended...some are better than others...</p> <p>We need guidance ...we need flexibility and \$\$\$</p>	<p>We look at the students independently...they want the socialization...even when they finish-- they still come back</p> <p>RISE...reinforced instruction students...state initiative....to move students in and out of gateway Math and English quicker with greater success</p>
<p>Hospitality and Tourism...</p> <p>Overall, we are putting more weight on</p> <p>Definition of I/DD.... they must self-identify.... most had</p>	<p>SOAR program (Skills Opportunities Awareness and Readiness) – minimum entrance scores on the CASA, 200 (195 and higher is ok) is the target score, following code of</p>	<p>Community College so many tracks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • Transition Academy or something like it • Con Ed 	<p>no consistent way to identify I/DD population...serve a lot more than we know...many high</p>

Central Focus Group Notes	Western Focus Group Notes	Eastern Focus Group Notes	Highlighted Points/ Takeaways
<p>an IEP.... all go through the Disability Office... The problem is when Curriculum comes to us at College and Career Readiness...we cannot be everything There is no 4th math requirement and no placement test...you only have GPA...</p> <p>Major issue is there is no consistent way to identify I/DD population...serve a lot more than we know...many students who are higher functioning [as to skills] do not self-identify We do not provide classroom modifications unless requested. No systemic way of assessing need.</p> <p>Need alignment between our accommodations and what an employer can support</p> <p>Main employers are Food Lion, McDonalds...lot of students are wanting to go into college...we are working on what our students are wanting to do....</p> <p>What do you think students want from the community college? Students come with a variety of goals. Most want a credential.... Parents can be a barrier to success and then there are those where the sky is the limit...mostly depends on the parents.... Students want to be successful...we need to help students define success in a realistic manner sometimes</p>	<p>conduct, bound to the same rules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need conversations with employers to education them about advantages such as tax breaks for hiring someone with disabilities <p>If they can score a valid score on the CASA – spots for 40 students in the ABE (literacy-based training program – reading, math, vocab, weekly theme with jobs in the area) refer to employment pathway program</p> <p>A pathway is Occupational Extension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to VR after the 1st year if they do not already have an open case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational track <p>Some CCs offer credentials, and some do not...some CC staff are not fully aware of what the CC has to offer</p> <p>Credentials do help people get a job ...we have modified adult basic education and we use the same curriculum...a couple of colleges do this. We have modules based on what VR says and the students say they need.... right now, we are offering a sewing class...we have done not photography...they do not get credentials... In August we implemented a pilot class that is more career oriented... You have two tracks and then based on performance...it can change Horticulture, sales or retail, commercial cleaning, food prep.....we do this for two years....at the system office we are told to kick them out...some keep them.... We have various levels of literacy...we have some students who have enrolled in college programming for 10-15 years... When we transitioned and got rid our Com Ed....25 students left and went next door to another CC, and they are still there. Cannot flip a switch as some people are committed to the way things are currently managed</p> <p>Go back to the system office...#2 on our 13 considerations...we MUST serve this population...definition of “serve” is vague...need instructions and clear guidance...we may be overthinking things...</p>	<p>functioning does not identify</p> <p>Most [students w/ I/DD] want a credential... must see what that test will allow for accommodations...not all are equal; you must see what the employer will allow....</p> <p>Students want to be successful.</p>

Central Focus Group Notes	Western Focus Group Notes	Eastern Focus Group Notes	Highlighted Points/ Takeaways
<p>but without appearing to not have confidence...we must help students understand “mini-goals” and paving a path to a higher goal. What happens when the student cannot get the CNA credential...you do not get credit? Employment is not a progress measure for us....it comes in 5 years from now... Most students want personal enrichment to feel successful...a lot of what they want is socialization... Some students do have strong employment goals, but a lot of desire to socialize. For students who have not been in a direct pathways...we will be offering two pathways...food service academy and pet care academy (slated to start in 2020) we have a very cooperative chef....out of 8 students 7 passed at 85% or better...partnering with a Vet office who is supportivewe will probably move into training and preparing for retail because they are hiring Non-profit: Many students want to be able to read better...we assist them with free tutoring...some students come to us reading at 2nd and 3rd grade levels.</p>		<p>IET...integrated educational track...we try to be creative and that is part of what causes difference We must balance the goal of employment with progress toward employment... What does the new “Comp Ed” program look like...how can one say that one is right, and one is not.... We are 100% Work Force Development....and it looks different everywhere.... We have students without a disability who have been around a long time and we do not get the same pressures... Some CCs put into place a policy in which you cannot stay forever without progress...a few CC put into place 2 years and they have been told they are out of compliance with WIOA There is a problem with both program and funding alignment. FTE funding cuts... Continuing to attend CC for 10-15 years is not best practice....at the end of the day it is about the \$\$\$.</p>	
<p>No idea of how many students on the campus....students may, for example be on the spectrum and managing fine...they may be only getting the services of the Disability Office....(this may be telling us that the numbers are better than we think....)</p>	<p>Several intake pathways, ESL orientation, earning a GED (HSE), specialized programs for life skills– more success with smaller employers, because of being rural, more customer service related (word of mouth) some students will move from one pathway to another pathway seamlessly –</p>	<p>Curriculum does not want to work with our students Because our programs are free, there is an impression that we don’t have the right to limit their participation...because it went on for so long, it’s hard to break the cycle...some group homes went out of business when we stopped</p>	<p>Some schools like have two tracks...Able works to support students who need a higher level of support. We are serving more college and curriculum population.</p>

Central Focus Group Notes	Western Focus Group Notes	Eastern Focus Group Notes	Highlighted Points/ Takeaways
<p>1200 people on the wait list for individuals who cannot get any services. We serve students who are more main streamed.... continuing education pathway.</p>	<p>sometimes Voc Rehab (VR) will bring students – marketing is an issue.</p>	<p>because they had to start paying for day...we were free. Transportation is a problem...some transportation systems have funding to support travel to school and other activities tied to employment while others do not....</p>	
<p>POWER is our program.... these are the lower functioning students...then we have the career pathway.... we have a culinary program.... students identify with a diagnosis in the old days...not required any more... Any of our programs they take a standardized test and that does draw the line sometimes and they need a qualifying score to participate.... Unfortunately, this needs to be a conversation about get more students in.....the feedback we receive...it is difficult for us to serve those students and remain where we need to be in terms of growth....(need to look at the federal measures) Problem...if you are going to serve more it could hurt your score on progress...higher grade on the testing.... In the past there has been an intentional effort to not serve this population....you can't make substantial progress....some transitioned in HRD and even there you might have a class of 18 and maybe 4 would get a job Increasing the number of students with I/DD should not make it the full responsibility of the CC....we</p>	<p>CC should be going into the High School and educating students who may not be aware of our programs; students are wanting education to meet their employment goals RVO, NC Works, Voc Rehab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VR struggles with job coaching, etc. <p>Educating community partners and educating families/case managers is a must – slow process</p>	<p>Barriers to being successful...rural areas do not have as many opportunities for employment...program use to be basic life skills and there was a benefit to that... "How long is too long"need something that says it is time to move along....it is life changing....telling parents that it is over is horrible....tough thing to do...and we have nothing to lean on for our decision...need guidance In some areas.... there is not enough of a population to keep the doors open....it's because it's not the services they are expecting to get....we need people to support the new mission....it needs to be marketed...also individuals in this work, work in silos.... Criteria for funding streams is often a barrier...grant driven</p>	<p>Increasing the number of students with I/DD should not rest solely with the CC... need others thinking about us and referring when appropriate. POWER is our program...these are the lower functioning students...then we have the career pathway.... it is difficult for us to serve those students and remain where we need to be in terms of growth... (need to look at the federal measures).</p> <p>Problem...if you are going to serve more it could hurt your score on progress...higher grade on the testing....</p>

Central Focus Group Notes	Western Focus Group Notes	Eastern Focus Group Notes	Highlighted Points/ Takeaways
<p>will need strong partnerships to be successful</p> <p>What is working well? Students are in a cohort...there are 6 of these...they are learning skills....really hands on18 students per class...Students may for it....grant funded....these are just in college and career readiness...we have only had a couple of students to go into curriculum...hospitality and barista....these they have to pay a tuition for...</p>			
<p>We have working adult literacy....currently most individuals are 2nd grade and below...we do activities around agriculture...learn to plant a garden and sell their products...we also have a culinary program but the chef will not play with me...if curriculum cannot deal with it, they come to me for help....we don't offer a credential...I have a lot of barriers... Students do sit for the ServSafe® credential...we look for the 3rd grade level....to sit for the ServSafe® Test not all can be successful...we had grant monies to pay for this. Are accommodations offered...keep in mind we have only been at this for one semester.</p>	<p>Families can be barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear about safety, stigma, bullied, not love and nurtured • Do not have same expectations as the program goal • Loss of benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benefits counseling is not something they do • Schedule conflicts • Transportation barriers <p>Transitions Conference was offered for Benefits Counselors; other would have benefited</p>	<p>We have 60 students that come every day...snow and all...that is how we get funded. WIOA has an honorable goal...tut there are lots of workarounds to make it work For any program to work...we need funding...there needs to do some flexible funding...its very expensive to serve this population.... Everything is more expensive for this population and you get dinged if their classroom hours are too much There needs to be training and workshops on best practices...some are not sustainable...some of the best practices are wrapped up where there is no other funding.... Project Search...there is no money to start new sights....it is a best practice Within the CC system there are Work Force recruiter...who works with employers to know what they need A lot of the successes happen because ...its people knowing people....we need intentional planning....too many inconsistencies...some of the</p>	<p>MEASURES: MSG does not recognize or consider the long-term nature of gains.</p> <p>Agreement that need measures for accountability, but it needs to have different focus. How to get 'credit' for job or work placements before the program time ends or down the road after leaving the college (state level to track?)</p> <p>Goal is employment, the questions is what an appropriate time for is attaining the goal and how do we set goals that consider individual needs</p> <p>Set the curbs wide enough to allow innovation and unique program designs</p>

Central Focus Group Notes	Western Focus Group Notes	Eastern Focus Group Notes	Highlighted Points/ Takeaways
		<p>differences are with the programs but some are inconsistencies with implementation.....sometimes inconsistencies are ok...not good or bad.....some are just different...inconsistencies and flexibility are two different things Enrolling, transitioning, employment and post-secondary.....5 areas where we can get a gain....the problem is how we test these gains...it can't be all paper and pen to measure....soft skills are great gains....need to equate it to their goals...</p> <p>We need to look at IETs...integrated educational technologies...</p> <p>Need flexibility in getting a job Volunteerism should be recognized.</p> <p>We do ServSafe®...we have adapted the modules but we have not adapted the certification....it would be great to do this...this could be a way to count their progress....modified to meet their needs...there are others who could benefit from this as well</p>	<p>needed by the community.</p>
<p>With the right amount of funding...creating programming for this population:</p> <p>Individuals need supports and this needs to factor into the cost of offering programming</p> <p>Need a workforce and/or advisory team that is constantly surveying and evaluating programming to stay current</p> <p>There needs to be a marketing strategy so people know we exist, and so employers will look to us to employ individuals when they complete their programming</p> <p>Need reliable</p>	<p>Vocational Rehab (VR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penalty for individuals going back to school is not happening because they are losing milestone payments • Job Coaches struggle with individuals • Lacking passion for helping individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community colleges picked up the ball because of the lack of VR progress • VR varies from office to office in terms of their knowledge and 		<p>Individuals will need supports.</p> <p>Need a workforce and/or advisory team charged with surveying & evaluating programming to stay current.</p> <p>Need marketing strategy for both recruitment of students and employers.</p> <p>Need funding waivers for flexibility.</p> <p>Need staff training/development</p> <p>Students need reliable transportation</p>

Central Focus Group Notes	Western Focus Group Notes	Eastern Focus Group Notes	Highlighted Points/ Takeaways
<p>transportation for participants... Students sometimes think their IEP follows them into the college setting, but it does not...we need to do a better job in helping them understand it does not. Need waivers so there are no penalties with federal outcomes. Community College...we wear a lot of hats...this needs its own [dedicated staff]. There needs to be training for staff, so they know how to teach and support this population...there needs to be a strong program development component Any new initiative will need leadership Does it lie within Career and College Readiness or the CC as a whole? Question needs to be answered</p>	<p>supports for individuals</p>		<p>Where does new initiative(s) lie in the CC-System structure? CCR or CC as a whole?</p>
<p>Some students are getting in wrong place to begin with.... we need a better way of evaluating and getting students aligned with where they need to be to be with...students coming in as just students is hard Should there be an early high school program leading to college program for students with an IEP/IDD...Colleges need to be invited to transitional meetings...of any sort. We can help with this... There are apprenticeship models within the community college...they are not doing this with I/DD population...What can be done differently to set parental expectation: Unfortunately, there are some parents who have very high expectations that we are</p>	<p>How do Community Colleges work with the school systems?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to IEP meetings, really in the high schools, cannot go lower than OCS so they are cherry picking individuals that will meet MSG goals • Rural county meet with the counselors and EC instructors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Biggest barrier is transportation (parents cannot transport them, no public-school buses) • One CC goes to schools, hosts tours for schools, work with VR – working well 		<p>Better evaluation systems for programs and processes across the board</p> <p>Colleges need to be invited to transitional meetings...of any sort benefits are an issue...</p> <p>This is a large effort if we are going to it right</p> <p>Whatever we do...everyone needs to be onboard or it will not be successful.</p> <p>Need a specialist in this area. Need expertise...you need funding...or legislation that says these</p>

Central Focus Group Notes	Western Focus Group Notes	Eastern Focus Group Notes	Highlighted Points/ Takeaways
<p>unable to fill and they don't clearly understand our role. We can be seen as a respite service to overwhelmed parents. There are times when it is unsafe for students to be on campus without adequate supports...Maintaining benefits can be an issue...we have a student who was very successful in a machine program and could have been placed in a job at \$17 per hour. His parents advised him to reject the position for fear of losing their benefits...especially medical supports. We attend high school functions...we have good relationships with VR.... we do fairs, festivals.... word of mouth...various advocacy groups... This will take a village.....we are dreaming and all these things are great...it takes a lot of offer...everyone needs to be on board or it will not be successful....you need a specialist in this area....you need expertise...you need funding....or legislation that says these students can take assessments for free Need buy-in with other areas of the college...need to talk to the Dean of enrollment....</p>			<p>students can take assessments for free.</p> <p>Need buy-in with other areas of the college...need to talk to the Dean of enrollment.</p>
	<p>Are we working from the right problem statement? This cannot be just about employment, it also needs to be about community readiness, life skills-Social Determinants of health – -Gains are all academic now, not related to employment -Problem statement needs to be readdressed</p>		<p>Employers Networks: Varies between CC taking ownership or VR—varies county to county.</p>

Central Focus Group Notes	Western Focus Group Notes	Eastern Focus Group Notes	Highlighted Points/ Takeaways
	<p>Any Transportation ideas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rides share programs not available for rural • A lot of programs are full, because of individual pickups (DOT funding) • A lot of students get bumped because of medical appointments • Cost of transportation is a barrier? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$12 per trip round trip 		

REMAINDER OF PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Attachment F: Research and Literature Resources

- (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://disabilitytraining.com/product-list.php?Workplace Skills-pg2-cid71.html](https://disabilitytraining.com/product-list.php?Workplace+Skills-pg2-cid71.html)
- (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://ncjobready.nc.gov>
- (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ncommerce.com/blog/2019/10/08/higher-education-leads-higher-earnings-students-disabilities-north-carolina>
- (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/sites/default/files/basic-pages/finance-operations/fc_08_budget_allocations_for_2-1_summary_fy_2018-19.pdf
- (AAIDD), A. A. (2010). Definition of Intellectual Disability. *Intellectual Disability: Definition, Classification, and Systems of Supports, 11*. Retrieved from www.AAIDD.org
- 2016 Medicaid Managed Care Regulations. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/managed-care/managed-care-authorities/index.html>
- 2019 Draft NC Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. (2020, June). *United State Plan*.
- (July 2018, July). *Addressing the Policy Tangle: Students with Intellectual Disability and the Path to Postsecondary Education, Employment and Community Living*.
- (2018). *Addressing the Policy Tangle: Students with Intellectual Disability and the Path to Postsecondary Education, Employment and Community Living*.
- BRIEF, D. (2018). *Working in the Community - Update 3 the Status and Outcomes of People with I/DD in Integrated Employment*.
- Butterworth, D. H. (2018). Working in the Community - Update 3: The Status and Outcomes of People with IDD in Integrated Employment. *National Core Indicators Data Brief*.
- Dan Findley, E. S. (February 14, 2019). Using PSO and CTE Data to Address Student Outcomes. *NTACT Webinar*.
- Disabilities, A. C. (2015). *Interim Report to: The Honorable Thomas E. Perez, United States Secretary of Labor, the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, the United States House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce*.
- (2019). *Draft Work Investment Opportunity Act - NC Public Works Plan, 2020*.
- Heike Boeltzig-Brown, D. S. (2006). The National Survey of Community Rehabilitation Providers, FY2004-2005 Report 1: Employment Outcomes of People with Developmental Disabilities in Integrated Employment. *Research to Practice 44*.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (2004).
- Jean Winsor, J. T. (2019). State Data: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes through 2017. *ThinkWork!*

- Landau, P. (2019). Positive Outcomes for Students with Intellectual Disability Attending College: Why Medicaid Waivers Should Provide Support. *Insight*(43).
- (n.d.). *Medicaid Clinical Coverage Policy 8-P*.
- Migliore, J. B. (2015). Trends in Employment Outcomes of Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2006-2013. *ThinkWork!*
- NC DHHS *Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/documents/comprehensive-statewide-needs-assessment-reports>
- NC Executive Order, 92, Employment First for North Carolinians with Disabilities. (2019, March 28).
- NC *Innovations Waiver*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/providers/programs-and-services/behavioral-health-idd/nc-innovations-waiver>
- North Carolina General Statutes, 122C-3. (n.d.). 12a and 17a.
- NTACT. (2019). *Five (5) part Webinar Series: Career Technical Education for Students with Disabilities*.
- Office of Disability Employment Policy, US Department of Labor, *Soft Skills for Workplace Success*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills>
- OMB Circular 87, Addressing Cost Allocation Plans for States. (1997, April 8). *TO Users of OMB Circular A-87 - Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments*.
- Paige Parisi, J. L. (2019). Positive Outcomes for Students with Intellectual Disability Attending College: Why Medicaid Waivers Should Provide Support. *INSIGHT Think college*(43).
- Paige Parisi, J. L. (2019). Use of Medicaid Waivers to Support Students with Intellectual Disability in College. (40).
- Paige Parisi, J. L. (2020). Medicaid HCBS Waiver Support for Students with Intellectual Disability Attending College: What's Available in Your State? *INSIGHT Think College*(44).
- Penn State college of Education, W. E. (December 19, 2019). Career Technical Education for Students with Disabilities. *NTACT Webinar*.
- Quinterno, J. (2019, March 14). *North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research*. Retrieved from How the 'open doors' stay open: Funding North Carolina's community colleges: <https://nccppr.org/how-the-open-doors-stay-open-funding-north-carolinas-community-colleges/#:~:text=Funding%20for%20North%20Carolina's%20community,in%20fiscal%20year%202015%2D16>.
- Smith Lee, S. R. (July 2019). Addressing the Policy Tangle: Students with Intellectual Disability and the Path to Postsecondary Education, Employment and Community Living. 15-18.
- US Department of Health and Human Services, N. I. (n.d.). Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDDs): Condition Information.