**Directions for Requesting Finish Line Grants Funding**

**Administered by Community College and Workforce Development Board Partnership**

Too often, financial emergencies like unexpected healthcare costs, childcare expenses, or car breakdowns prevent community college students who are on the cusp of completion from reaching that milestone. On July 12th, 2018, Governor Cooper announced the Finish Line Grants program that will help students complete their training when facing unforeseen challenges.  Finish Line Grants can be used for course materials, housing, medical needs, dependent care, or other financial emergencies that students face through no fault of their own.

Students enrolled in community colleges across North Carolina are eligible for Finish Line Grants. The Finish Line Grants program requires local community colleges and local workforce development boards to submit a joint proposal to be an approved partnership to administer the program. Approved partnerships are eligible for funding to distribute Finish Line Grants to students. Proposals for Finish Line Grants partnership participants will be reviewed and approved by the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions with input from the North Carolina Community College System.

**Proposal Process**

The Finish Line Grants Partnership Proposal Process was developed jointly by the North Carolina Community College System Office and the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions. As the Finish Line Grants program is a new initiative, the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions and the North Carolina Community College System Office continue to refine materials and processes. If you have questions, concerns, or need assistance in completing a proposal, please contact Dr. J.W. Kelley, Associate Vice President of Student Services, North Carolina Community College System, at kelleyj@nccommunitycolleges.edu or Danny Giddens, Assistant Secretary of Workforce Solutions of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, at dgiddens@nccommerce.com.

**Step 1.** The North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions publishes the partnership proposal form on <https://www.nccommerce.com/workforce>.

**Step 2.** Interested workforce development board (“WDB”) and community college partners—the “partnership”—must submit a completed proposal, accompanied by a signed Memorandum of Understanding, to FinishLine@NCWorks.gov.

Partnership proposals will be accepted beginning Monday, July 30th and reviewed in the order in which they are received. The North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions, with input from the North Carolina Community College System, will review and make determinations on complete proposals on at least a monthly basis beginning in September 2018.

**Proposal Requirements**

Proposals must include the following components (please attempt to limit each response to no more than 250 words):

1. Certification that the partnership will implement the requirements of the Finish Line Grants Program (attached). Where not otherwise noted, discretion will be left to the local partnership as to the design and implementation of the Finish Line Grants program.
2. Outline a student-friendly application process for Finish Line Grants starting with a student’s inquiry into receiving a Finish Line Grant through the decision whether to award a Finish Line Grant.
3. State the criteria to be used to decide if the student will be awarded a Finish Line Grant, including whether the student is in good academic standing and has completed 50% (including current enrollment) of their degree or credential program. Partnerships may choose to include additional criteria, such as enrollment in programs providing training for high-demand occupations. Additional criteria will be left to the discretion of the local partnership.
4. Describe any financial emergency grant programs the community college has administered in the past. You may attach relevant documents pertaining to existing programs.
5. Provide to the best of your ability an approximate estimate of total funding needed for Finish Line Grants for the 2018-19 school year and explain the basis for the estimate (e.g. historical data from current emergency grant programs, knowledge of student needs, etc.). As the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions and North Carolina Community College System review proposals they will ensure each partnership has the opportunity to receive funding.
6. Identify final approving authority. The North Carolina Community College System and the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions assume that the partnership will designate the community college as the entity that confirms the student applicant meets the partnership’s criteria and the WDBs will approve and disburse funding requests. Please confirm that this is the structure your partnership will follow or describe the alternative structure proposed.
7. Describe the process for evaluating and fulfilling students’ Finish Line Grants requests within three business days. The three-day window begins when a student submits acceptable documentation as determined by the partnership.
8. Describe how the partnership will conduct outreach efforts (or what outreach efforts the partnership will use) to inform students, faculty and staff of the Finish Line Grants program in fall 2018 and beyond (e.g., social media, announcements at events, campus flyers, faculty announcements in class, etc.), including who will be responsible for conducting the outreach.

**Memorandum of Understanding Requirements**

At a minimum, the memorandum of understanding between the community college and the workforce development board shall include the following:

From the community college:

1. Acknowledgement that the financial aid office understands the Finish Line Grants program and how to assist students in applying for and obtaining a Finish Line Grant.
2. A monthly report to local workforce development board/NCWorks Career Center staff on the academic progress of Finish Line Grant recipients, including whether each recipient remains in good academic standing, has completed his or her degree or credential, and category of student needs (e.g. transportation, housing, dependent care, etc.).
3. Access to community college facilities for local workforce development board/NCWorks Career Center staff as they make every effort to meet with students in a location convenient to that student in order to determine WIOA eligibility and collected related documentation from the student.

 From the workforce development board:

1. Acknowledgement that the local workforce development board/NCWorks Career Center staff understands the Finish Line Grants program and how to assist students in applying for and obtaining a Finish Line Grant.
2. Enrollment of WIOA eligibility and related documentation into NCWorks Online, ongoing case management services, and track the credential attainment and employment outcomes of the student.
3. A monthly report on the amount of funding disbursed, the number of students served, and data on Finish Line Grant recipients’ academic progress (as provided by the community college), employment outcomes, and category of need to the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions.
4. Local workforce development board/NCWorks Career Center staff will travel as needed to the local community college to meet with and assist students requesting a Finish Line Grant.

**Step 3.** The North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions, with input from the North Carolina Community College System, will review proposals and make determinations on at least a monthly basis.

**Step 4.** The North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions will notify both partners upon making a decision whether or not to approve a partnership proposal**.**

**Step 5.** The local WDB of approved partnerships will receive initial funding as soon as possible after approval of a partnership. The initial funding amount may be all or a portion of the amount requested. Subsequent funding may be available.

**Step 6.** The WDB will be responsible for disbursing Finish Line Grant funds.

**Proposal Requesting Finish Line Grants Funding**

**Administered by Community College and Workforce Development Board Partnership**

This proposal is submitted by:

**Community College**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and **Workforce Development Board:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ which is located within the service area of the community college.

**Contact Person(s) for Information Contained within the Proposal for Funding:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Community College: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Workforce Development Board: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Completed Partnership Proposal**

A completed partnership proposal that addresses items detailed in Step 2 of the Proposal Process must be attached to this proposal.

1. **Attach Signed Memorandum of Understanding**

A signed Memorandum of Understanding between the community college president and the workforce development board director must be attached to this proposal.

**Certification**

*The community college and workforce development board (the “partnership”) have submitted a joint proposal to participate in the Finish Line Grants Program and have signed the attached Memorandum of Understanding.*

*The partnership agrees to the following:*

1. *Students enrolled in community college may apply for Finish Line Grants.*
2. *Students must be in good academic standing and have completed at least 50% (including current enrollment) of their degree or credential program.*
3. *The maximum grant per student per semester is $1,000. At the partnership’s discretion, students may be eligible for grant awards in more than one semester.*
4. *Funds will not be distributed directly to students. For example, if a student applies for a Finish Line Grant to pay for a car repair, the approved payment will go to the car repair entity.* *Grants for items where an entity cannot be paid directly (e.g. gas and groceries) may be distributed through gift cards as determined by the partnership.*
5. *Grants will not be conditioned on students completing additional requirements (e.g. community service hours) but every effort should be made to ensure that students are highly likely to continue their training.*
6. *There will be no pay-back requirement unless it is determined that the student acted fraudulently in applying for or using the grant.*
7. *The partnership will establish a process to ensure student requests are evaluated and fulfilled within three business days of the completed and documented request for assistance and describe that process in detail in their proposal.*
8. *Community colleges will report to the local WDB/NCWorks Career Center staff the academic progress of Finish Line Grant recipients, including whether each recipient remains in good academic standing, has completed his or her degree or credential, and category of student needs (transportation, housing, dependent care, etc.).*
9. *The partnership will report the amount of funding disbursed, the number of students served, and data on Finish Line Grant recipients’ academic progress (as provided by the community college), employment outcomes, and category of need to the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions.*

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 Signature, Director, Workforce Development Board Date

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 Signature, President, Community College Date