



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR
ROY COOPER

Governor Cooper Announces Finish Line Grants Program to Help Community College Students Complete Training

\$7 Million in Federal Funds Will Help Students Who Face Unforeseen Financial Challenges

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Today, Governor Cooper announced the Finish Line Grants program to help community college students who face unforeseen financial emergencies complete their training. The program will leverage up to \$7 million in federal funds to help students pay for course materials, housing, medical needs, dependent care, or other financial emergencies that students may face through no fault of their own.

“We know far too many students cite challenges other than academic reasons for not finishing school, and this program will help ensure more people can finish their training and get a good-paying job to support themselves and their families,” said Gov. Cooper.

Grants will be available for the 2018-2019 school year. Every community college in North Carolina may participate in the Finish Line Grants program but is not required to do so. Community colleges and workforce development boards will collaborate to apply for funding and will establish a joint process for reviewing funding requests from students who have completed 75 percent of their degree or credential. Community college students may receive a maximum of \$1,000 per semester by contacting their community colleges’ financial aid office or their local NCWorks Career Center to apply.

“Many community college students juggle work, family, and life, so financial emergencies can bring their school work to a halt,” said Peter Hans, president of the North Carolina Community College System. “A Finish Line Grant could make all the difference to helping a student complete their degree or credential.”

Data is not kept on specific reasons for failure to complete training programs, so it is difficult to get an exact count of how many individuals could be served through the Finish Line Grants program. However, some community colleges currently administer emergency grants that have helped thousands of students complete their training or credential program. Many of these

emergency grant programs are funded by faculty and staff and cannot serve all the students currently in need.

Cooper made today's announcement at Wake Technical Community College. A recent Wake Tech graduate, Adam Leach, benefitted from a program similar to Finish Line Grants and is now working as a nurse at UNC REX Healthcare.

"Without the Wake Tech Completion Scholarship, I would have never graduated. This is the help I needed. My wife and I knew if we could just get through these hard but temporary times and graduated then things would be alright. Now I am an RN at WakeMed in Raleigh, my wife is a radiography technician, and we made it," said Leach.

In his most recent budget, Gov. Cooper proposed \$20 million for Finish Line Grants to be made available for four-year college and university students, in addition to community college students, but the General Assembly did not include it in the budget. The funding for this iteration of the program will come from the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

"We must maintain a strong workforce to continue attracting companies and helping business thrive in North Carolina," said N.C. Secretary of Commerce Anthony M. Copeland. "The Finish Line Grants program will further expand our pool of skilled workers by eliminating barriers that prevent talented students from completing their training and getting rewarding jobs that support them and their families."

"It's unfortunate that the legislature did not include the Finish Line Grants program in their budget to help a wider range of students get this support, but I am proud to take this step today for community college students. As I continue to hear from business leaders across the state that their number one need is a well-trained workforce, my administration will continue to prioritize preparing workers," said Gov. Cooper.