

# Supporting the College and Career Transition from High School to Beyond During Times of Uncertainty:

## Viewpoints from College and Career Access Programs



## College of Education Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research

### About the Belk Center

The Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research, at North Carolina State University's College of Education, develops and sustains exceptional community college leaders who are committed to advancing college access, the social and economic mobility of their colleges' students, and the economic competitiveness of their regions. The Center conducts and disseminates research to address current and emerging student success challenges facing community college leaders and policymakers in North Carolina and beyond. The Belk Center commits to dismantling systemic barriers to racial equity in education through evidence-based strategies that focus on the outcomes of Black, Latinx and American Indian students ([read our Commitment to Equity here](#)). The John M. Belk Endowment, which supports this center, is a private family foundation committed to transforming postsecondary educational opportunities to meet North Carolina's evolving workforce needs.

### About MyFutureNC

myFutureNC is a statewide nonprofit focused on educational attainment that includes some of North Carolina's most influential education, business, and civic leaders. The organization was formed with the goal to create a stronger, more competitive North Carolina. myFutureNC is working across sectors and in communities throughout the state to close gaps in the education pathway, to promote alignment between educational programming and business/industry needs, and to ultimately improve educational opportunities for all North Carolinians. Join our efforts. Stay in touch, and help champion success for our state and all of its people. Visit [www.myfuturenc.org](http://www.myfuturenc.org).

### Acknowledgements

Funding for this work was provided by the John M. Belk Endowment. We appreciate their partnership in supporting college and career readiness in North Carolina. We want to thank myFutureNC for partnering with us on this project and helping to make important connections to organizations within the community. Additionally, we want to acknowledge the important contributions of members of the Belk Center staff including Jemilia S. Davis, Audrey J. Jaeger, and Shauna Morin. Erin O'Quinn contributed to the graphic design of this report.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Efforts to increase educational attainment** are supported by federal, state, and local policy, practice, and support; national non-profits; and the business sector as it strives to fill labor gaps. In North Carolina, myFutureNC is working to ensure that by 2030, 2 million North Carolinians have a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree. This goal is necessary as only 1.6 million adults will meet the attainment definition in 2030, leaving a gap of an estimated 400,000 individuals. North Carolina will need an estimated 400,000 additional residents to attain a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree to meet the demands of our businesses and industries.<sup>1</sup> Across the state, educators, school counselors, non-profits, coaches, career development coordinators, and mentors have stepped up to support students to close the credential gap.

This evaluation report explores the operations, resources offered, and coverage of these services among organizations providing support for college and career access for North Carolina's high school students. The goals of this evaluation report are to highlight areas where there is substantial support and resources for students as well as illuminate gaps in these services, and provide recommendations for future collaborative projects.

We interviewed leaders and directors at 24 access and achievement organizations to better understand their staffing structure, key services, and how they collaborate with one another to serve students. We included general information about three federal TRiO programs that are operating at local colleges, universities, and organizations throughout the state: Talent Search, Upward Bound, and Upward Bound Math and Science. Additionally, 12 of those programs responded to a survey to share specific information regarding their key services and collaborations. Finally, the organizations offered insight into how the COVID-19 pandemic has provided unforeseen opportunities and challenges in supporting students through the college and career decision making process (see special box on page 19).

## BELOW ARE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSIDER:

### **Recommendation 1: Continue to create opportunities for collaboration between college access and career development organizations.**

Promoting opportunities for collaboration across organizations serving students in similar areas is key to meeting educational and workforce needs. Several organizations share interest in strengthening cross-organizational relationships and intentionally collaborating with local business entities through streamlining funding and providing complimentary and capacity building services all to foster greater opportunities for students. There are already examples of collaboration across multiple organizations; however, many organizations are siloed due to limited sources of funding and organizational priorities. While these priorities, such as funder goals and institutional needs, can create barriers to collaboration, the educational and workforce needs should be prioritized.

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<sup>1</sup> myFutureNC. (2020). *Our education system and economy are out of sync*. <https://www.myfuturenc.org/>

### **Recommendation 2: Broaden the scope of services offered by a statewide network of staff.**

In every county in North Carolina, school counselors (hired by Local Education Agencies - LEAs), Career and College Promise staff (hired by local community colleges), and career development coordinators (hired by local principals and career and technical administrators) are available to serve students by helping them make career and college decisions. In addition, of the organizations we interviewed, there are a number of other statewide organizations who assist students in all but 5 of North Carolina's 100 counties. College and career access programs provide a variety of services, the most widespread are assistance with the Free Application for Student Financial Assistance (FAFSA), assistance with scholarship applications, and college applications. However, assistance with career development planning is offered less frequently across North Carolina.

### **Recommendation 3: Center the whole family in the decision-making process about college.**

Family involvement is important as college is a substantial investment of time, money, and commitment. Several organizations were intentional about engaging families when sharing information, planning workshops, or providing resources related to college and career access. One organization even developed a six-week curriculum program to help parents understand their students' educational goals and how they could support their students with those goals. The intentionality of family involvement was not widespread across the state, but the organizations that involved families recognized that family involvement often strengthened the relationships they were developing with students.

### **Recommendation 4: Streamline access to student-level data and tracking of outcomes through a database system.**

College and career access organizations track outcomes, such as college application submission rates, FAFSA completion rates, postsecondary enrollment and graduation rates, and other performance indicators. Many of the student outcomes of interest are often common between organizations and could benefit from a streamlined network of student-level and shared information. Several organizations noted that the cost for college access software is quite high. Lack of affordable software and streamlined access to data creates duplication of services and potential inequities in providing resources to students.

**“The goals of this evaluation report are to highlight areas where there is substantial support and resources for students as well as illuminate gaps in these services, and provide recommendations for future collaborative projects.”**





## INTRODUCTION

**Efforts to increase educational attainment** are supported by federal, state, and local policy, practice, and support; national non-profits; and the business sector as it strives to fill labor gaps. In North Carolina, myFutureNC is working to ensure that by 2030, 2 million North Carolinians have a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree. This goal is necessary as only 1.6 million adults will meet the attainment definition in 2030, leaving a gap of an estimated 400,000 individuals. North Carolina will need an estimated 400,000 additional residents to attain a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree to meet the demands of our businesses and industries.<sup>2</sup> Across the state, educators, school counselors, career development coordinators (CDCs), non-profits, coaches, and mentors have stepped up to support students to close the credential gap. With this goal in mind, it is important now than ever to analyze the resources and organizations in North Carolina aiding our students to this goal.

myFutureNC, a statewide collaboration between North Carolina leaders in education, business, and government, is a part of the conversation, focusing on educational attainment. Bridging the gap between educational attainment and workforce development, myFutureNC is working across sectors and in communities throughout the state to:

- » Close gaps in postsecondary attainment.
- » Promote alignment between educational programming and business/industry needs.
- » Ultimately improve the quality of educational opportunities for all North Carolinians.

Today's workforce is seeing the detrimental effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with unemployment reaching historical highs, businesses struggling to stay afloat, healthcare

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<sup>2</sup> myFutureNC. (2020). *Our education system and economy are out of sync*. <https://www.myfuturenc.org/>

workers fighting on the frontlines, and students uncertain about their future. As the nation strives to protect the health and wellbeing of its citizens and sustain the economy, the future of the labor force remains uncertain. According to the November 2020 Employment Situation Summary, “the number of long-term unemployed (those jobless for 27 weeks or more) increased in October by 1.2 million to 3.6 million, accounting for 32.5 percent of the total unemployed.”<sup>3</sup> Yet, when broken down by education, the unemployment rate is lower for individuals with a bachelor’s degree or higher. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that among people age 25 and older with a bachelor’s degree or higher, the unemployment rate was 2.0 percent in January 2020, and 3.8 percent for people age 25 and older with a high school diploma.<sup>4</sup> Yet, the percentage of students with credentials is not projected to keep up with these employment projections. Rebounding the labor market will be difficult following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the efforts to address challenges to fulfill workforce demands and talent shortages, before the pandemic, must be examined and analyzed to inform future efforts.

Vital to this work are the organizations and resources that aim to ensure North Carolina’s students have access and success in postsecondary education. College advisers, CDCs, career coaches, and school counselors, to name a few, support students to apply to college, to earn a credential/degree, and to competitively enter the workforce. These organizations partner and collaborate with local schools and other organizations to provide college knowledge resources tailored to the community, facilitate job opportunities for students, and share data to meet common goals. It is important to understand the organizations available to students across the state, their goals and successes, and how they measure these successes. This understanding will not only inform the work needed to improve North Carolina’s workforce, but this understanding will also guide efforts after the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It is important to understand the organizations available to students across the state, their goals and successes, and how they measure these successes.”

This evaluation report highlights the goals, structure, and successes of organizations that support staff, such as college advisers, CDCs, career coaches, and school counselors who advise and guide students during college and career decision-making processes. The key overarching evaluation questions explored through interviews with leaders of college access organizations were:

- » What is the landscape of career coaching and college access programs currently operating in North Carolina public high schools?
- » What opportunities exist for these programs to collaborate with one another?
- » What measurements are used at a state level to evaluate success?

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. (2020, November 6). *Employment situation summary* [Press release]. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/emp/sit.nr0.htm>

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (2020, February 12). *Unemployment rate 2.0 percent for college grads, 3.8 percent for high school grads in January 2020*. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2020/unemployment-rate-2-percent-for-college-grads-3-8-percent-for-high-school-grads-in-january-2020.htm>

In collaboration with myFutureNC, the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research identified college access and career readiness organizations that serve North Carolina statewide or large regions of North Carolina. After identifying organizations from online searches and referrals, the Belk Center evaluation team distributed an online survey to collect additional organizational recommendations from practitioners, researchers, and administrators. The evaluation team identified 36 organizations to explore. Please refer to Appendix A for the data collection and sample methodologies used for this evaluation report.

The evaluation is organized into the following sections: definitions, key insights, recommendations, and conclusions. Maps of North Carolina throughout the evaluation report showcase overlapping services provided by college access and career readiness organizations and areas where there are gaps in coverage.

## DEFINITIONS:

The selected titles listed in this section are the ones more commonly used by programs and defined here for clarification. There may be additional titles used by programs we interviewed as well as more local services we did not include. All these individuals are included when we reference advisers, coaches, counselors, and CDCs throughout the evaluation report.

**Career Coach:** Assists students with determining career goals and identifying community college programs that would enable students to achieve these goals.

**College Adviser:** Staff who work alongside school counselors to help students prepare and matriculate to a place where they will get a credential. College advisers promote a college-going culture within high schools. College advisers usually support seniors, in some instances they may support all students to build relationships and promote the importance of college.

**Career Development Coordinator (CDC):** Staff, supported by Career and Technical Education funds, coordinate career development services for all students. The CDC works collaboratively with administrators, student services personnel, and teachers to ensure the delivery of career development services. CDCs facilitate linkages with parents, business/industry, postsecondary institutions, and community organizations to support students' transition to postsecondary education and employment.<sup>5</sup>

**School Counselor:** School counselors are certified/licensed educators who improve student success for all students. School counselors promote student success, provide preventive services, and respond to identified student needs by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program that addresses academic, career, and personal/social development for all students. For the career component, they work with K-12 students, staff, and families, to promote student career and college awareness, exploration, and readiness.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/career-and-technical-education/career-planning-and-placement#career-development-coordination>

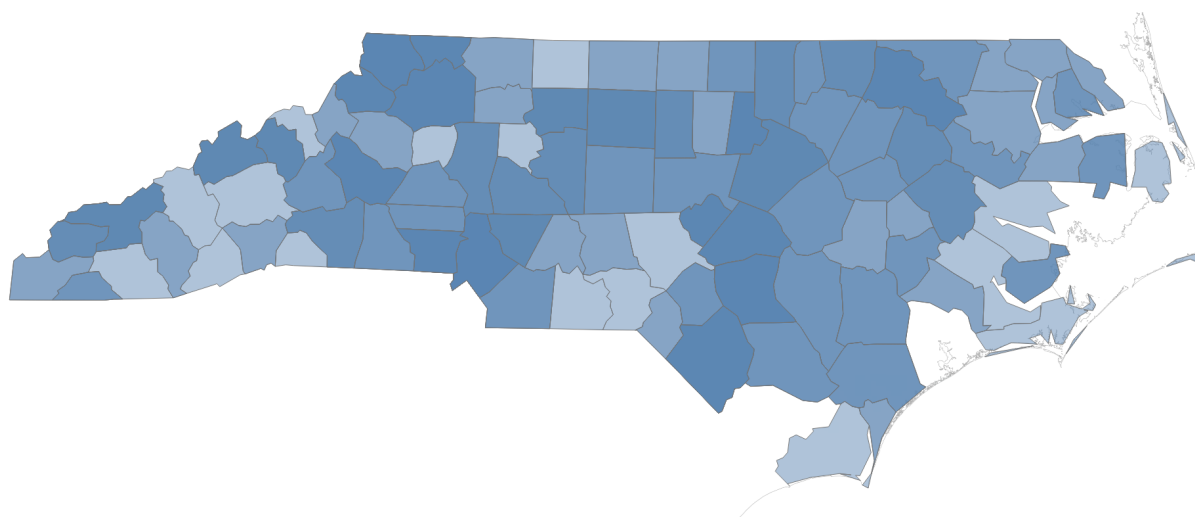


## KEY INSIGHTS

Across North Carolina, there are many organizations who provide career and college support to students from high school into college. Three organizations that are systematically dispersed across the state are elementary through high school counselors, Career and College Promise staff, and CDCs. School counselors are professional staff who work within public K-12 schools and are hired by the individual LEA. North Carolina's community colleges work with local high schools to offer dual enrollment programs through the Career and College Promise Program and staff associated with the program. CDCs coordinate career development services for students. The CDC works collaboratively with administrators, student services personnel, and teachers to ensure the delivery of career development services. CDCs facilitate linkages with parents, business/industry, postsecondary institutions, and community organizations to support students' transition to postsecondary education and employment. There are also a number of additional organizations that operate throughout the state (Appendix C), albeit not at a fully statewide level. This evaluation report focuses on these statewide and large regional organizations while acknowledging that there may be local or smaller regional organizations, with whom we did not engage, also working to help students make career and college choices. This section identifies key insights regarding resource allocation, gaps in service, and exceptional practices to promote informed decision-making amongst students and families. Finally, we recognize that COVID-19 has changed the way college and career access programs currently serve students and provide insights into how the pandemic has impacted students, staff, and services.

***We recognize and want to acknowledge that there are several organizations (e.g., Career and College Promise liaisons, College Foundation of North Carolina [CFNC], school counselors) operating in all 100 counties in North Carolina.*** There are also a number of other statewide or large regional organizations that assist students in all but five counties. Our review identified that 17 of the 100 counties have at least one other active career and college access organization, while 78 counties have more than one program. When mapping the locations and service areas of the organizations that we engaged in this project, we identified five counties that are not served by programs other than CFNC, Career and College Promise staff, or school counselors: South East North Carolina - Columbus and Onslow; North East - Camden, Currituck, and Hyde. We acknowledge that there may be local organizations in these communities that we did not capture in our data collection process. Please note that Career and College Promise staff, CFNC, and school counselors are not included in the maps in this report since they operate in all 100 counties.

**Figure 1. Career and College Access Organizations Operating in North Carolina**



*Note.* Dark blue = 4+; Medium = 3; Medium light = 2; Light blue = 1; White = 0



**The most common partnerships to provide students with college and career supports are: School Counselors, Career Development Coordinators, Career Coaches and Career and College Promise Coordinators, and College Foundation of North Carolina.** These four groups were cited frequently in interviews and focus groups as a partner with college and career access organizations. Of all organizations interviewed, the common factor with these four groups is that they operate statewide and exist - in some capacity - through staff or in partnership with all public North Carolina high schools.

Each of these four groups have clear and complementary roles. For instance, school counselors serve as the first line of communication and outreach with students. CDCs coordinate career development services for all students. The CDC works collaboratively with administrators, student services personnel, and teachers to ensure the delivery of career development services. CDCs facilitate linkages with parents, business/industry, postsecondary institutions, and community organizations to support students' transition to postsecondary education and employment. Finally, CFNC plays a large role in facilitating the actual application of "how to" attend a college in North Carolina. While the roles of these groups are complimentary, the evaluation team did not always hear about robust efforts to coordinate with each other.

**Figure 2. Collaborative Partnerships Between Organizations Providing Student Support for College and Career Access**

	Career Development Coordinators	CFNC	College Advising Corps	Communities in Schools	Communities in Schools -- Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates	GEAR UP	North Carolina Community Colleges	School Counselors	The Juntos 4-H Program (Juntos)	Upward Bound
Career Development Coordinators		✓					✓	✓		
CFNC	✓						✓			✓
College Advising Corps	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	
College Launch*	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		
Communities in Schools -- Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Crosby Scholars*	✓	✓						✓		
GEAR UP	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
LatinxEd*		✓	✓					✓		
North Carolina Community Colleges	✓					✓		✓		
School Counselors	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Talent Search	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
The Juntos 4-H Program (Juntos)		✓								
Upward Bound		✓	✓				✓	✓		
Upward Bound Math and Science (UBMS)		✓	✓				✓	✓		

*Note.* College Advising Corps is inclusive of College Advising Corps at North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University, Davidson College, and Appalachian State University; North Carolina Community Colleges is inclusive of Career Coaches and partnerships with Career and College Promise Coordinators; \*indicates focus group participants.

***There are many organizations that work with students around college and career decisions; these organizations provide additional capacity to assure college access and create a web of support for students.***

School counselors in North Carolina often have caseloads larger than the national recommended ratio of 250:1<sup>6</sup> and have many responsibilities, one of which is providing students support around career and college decisions. The evaluation team heard that organizations have missions focusing on specific student populations (see organizational descriptions in Appendix C), but they often take a holistic approach and will serve any student who seeks assistance. The organizations typically work with students in all grades ranging from 5th through 12th grade, whereas school counselors serve all students in their schools K-12. These additional advisers, coaches, counselors, and CDCs provide capacity around college and career decisions for school counselors and the positions supplement school counselors' efforts. **Figure 2** shows organizations we interviewed (left column) and the organizations they indicated they partner with (top row).

***College and career access programs provide a variety of services (Figure 3), the most widespread are assistance with FAFSA, scholarships, and college applications while assistance with career development planning is offered less frequently across North Carolina.***

**Figures 4, 5, and 6** show that organizations have widespread coverage in helping students across North Carolina with (1) FAFSA Completion (2) Scholarship Applications, and (3) College Applications. These are the key services confirmed by our interviews though there is uncertainty about students' access to these services given COVID-19 and differing access to broadband internet. These three maps also highlight the counties where we did not identify organizations working on the aforementioned college access services. While **Figure 3** shows that many organizations offer career development planning, the reach of these organizations is limited across the state (see Appendix E: Organizations Who Assist Students with Career Development Planning by County). Digging deeper into specific career development activities, we see employer visits (**Figure 7**), internships (**Figure 8**), and apprenticeships (**Figure 9**) are not as widespread as the more college-oriented services leaving this as an area where additional resources and attention are needed. For additional maps about services offered by college and career access programs, see Appendix E.



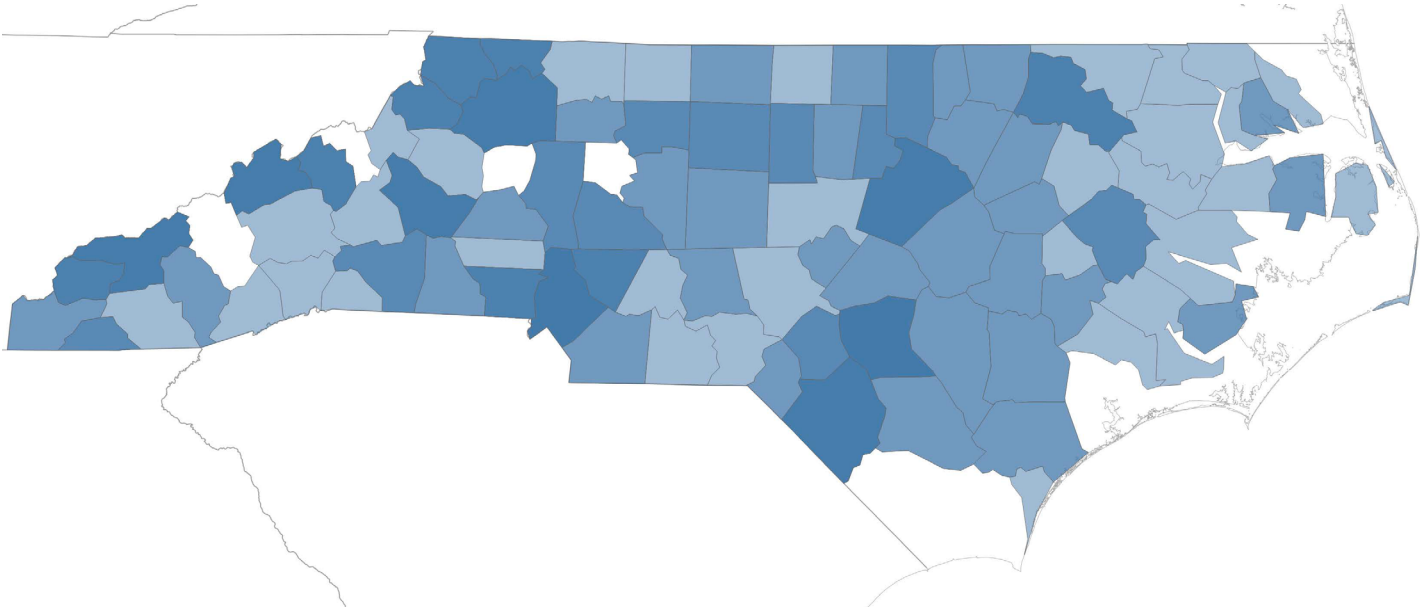
<sup>6</sup> National Association for the College Admission Counseling, & American School Counselor Association (n.d.). State-by-state student-to-counselor ratio report: 10-year trends. <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Publications/ratioreport.pdf>

**Figure 3. Primary Services for College and Career Access Organizations**

	College Application Assistance	FAFSA Completion Assistance	Offers Scholarships	Career Development Planning	Internship, Apprenticeship, or Shadowing Opportunities	Employer Visits	Mentoring	Parent and Family Engagement
Appalachian State GEAR UP	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Apprenticeship 2000	✓		✓ *		✓	✓		✓
Career Development Coordinators	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CFNC	✓	✓		✓				✓
College Advising Corps	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
College Launch**	✓	✓					✓	✓
Communities in Schools -- Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crosby Scholars*	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
GEAR UP	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gen One	✓	✓						
LatinxEd**	✓	✓						✓
North Carolina Community Colleges	✓		✓					
Say Yes Guilford	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
School Counselors	✓	✓		✓				✓
Student U	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Talent Search***	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Juntos 4-H Program (Juntos)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Upward Bound***	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Upward Bound Math and Science (UBMS)***	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓

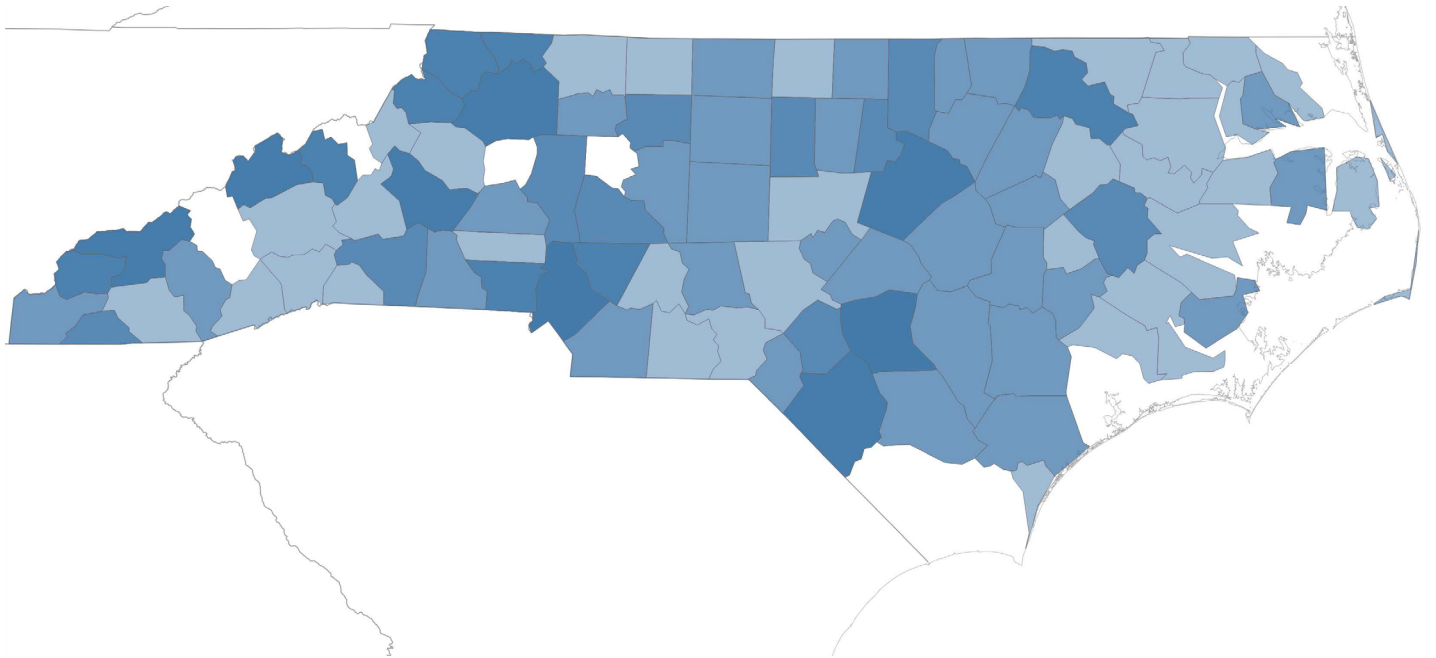
*Note.* For detailed information about these activities, see Appendix D. College Advising Corps is inclusive of College Advising Corps at North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University, Davidson College, and Appalachian State University; North Carolina Community Colleges is inclusive of Career Coaches, partnerships with Career and College Promise Coordinators, and Perkins Coordinators; \* while it is not called a scholarship, Apprenticeship 2000 pays for tuition, books, parking passes, and other expenses for students participating in certain apprenticeship programs; \*\* indicates focus group participants; "Offers scholarships" means the organization has funds to support college scholarships; \*\*\* Services and implementation of programs may differ by each organization who receives funding from these federal TRIO programs.

**Figure 4. Organizations Who Assist Students with FAFSA Completion by County**



*Note.* Dark blue = 4+; Medium = 3; Medium light = 2; Light blue = 1; White = 0

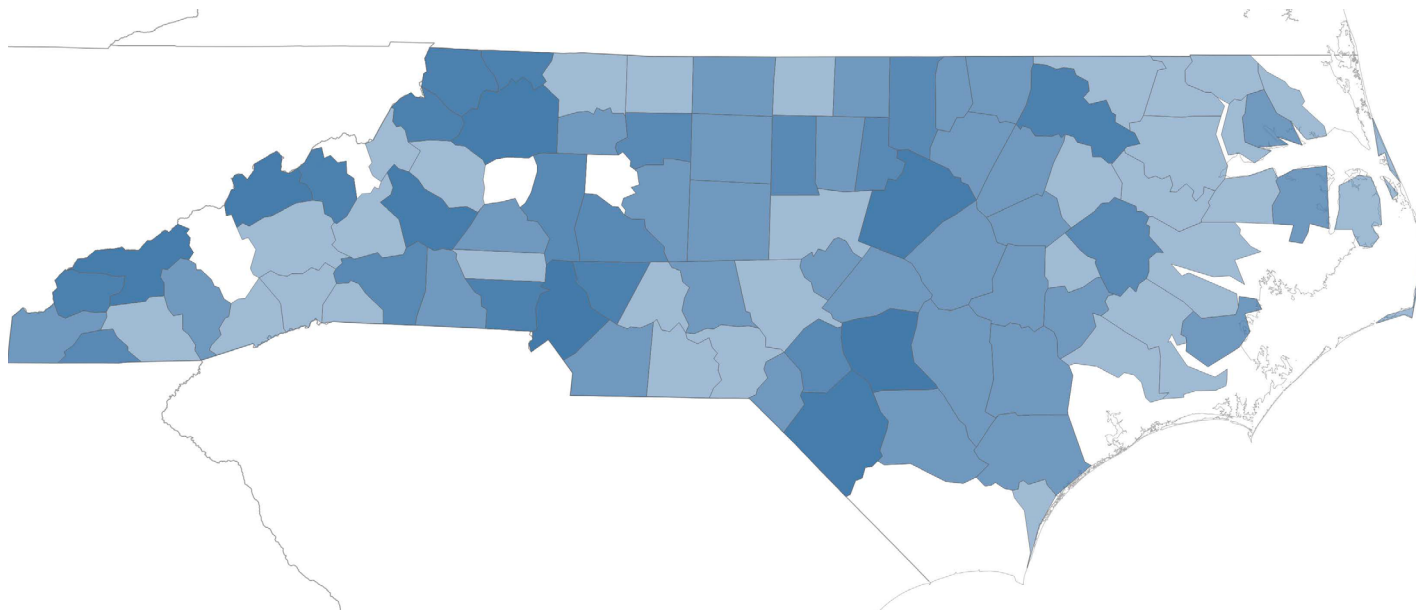
**Figure 5. Organizations Who Assist Students with Scholarship Applications by County**



*Note.* Dark blue = 4+; Medium = 3; Medium light = 2; Light blue = 1; White = 0

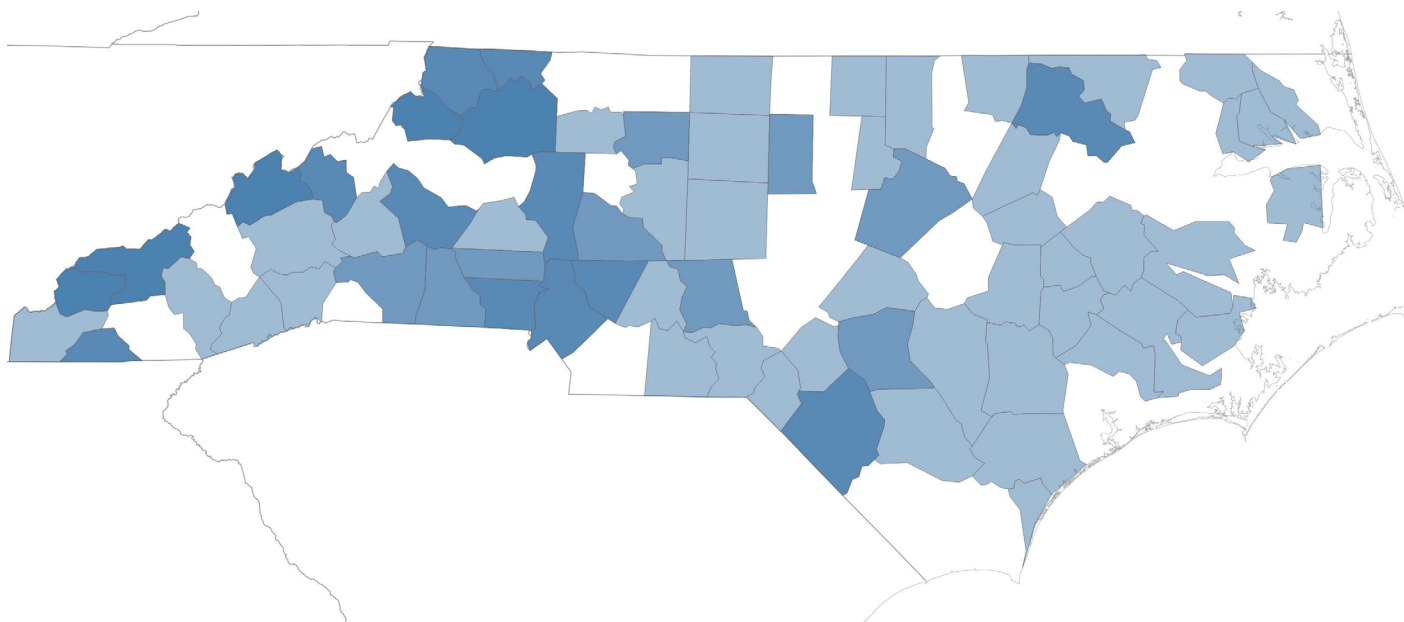


**Figure 6. Organizations Who Assist Students with College Applications by County**



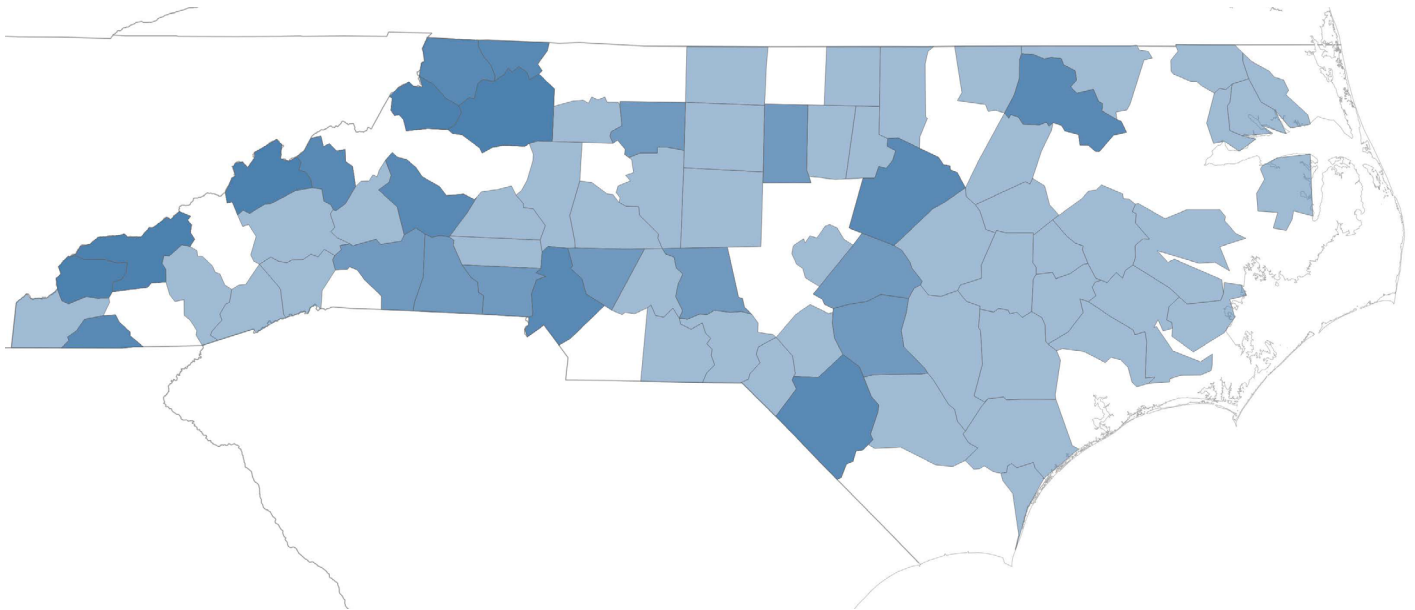
*Note.* Dark blue = 4+; Medium = 3; Medium light = 2; Light blue = 1; White = 0

**Figure 7. Employer Visits**



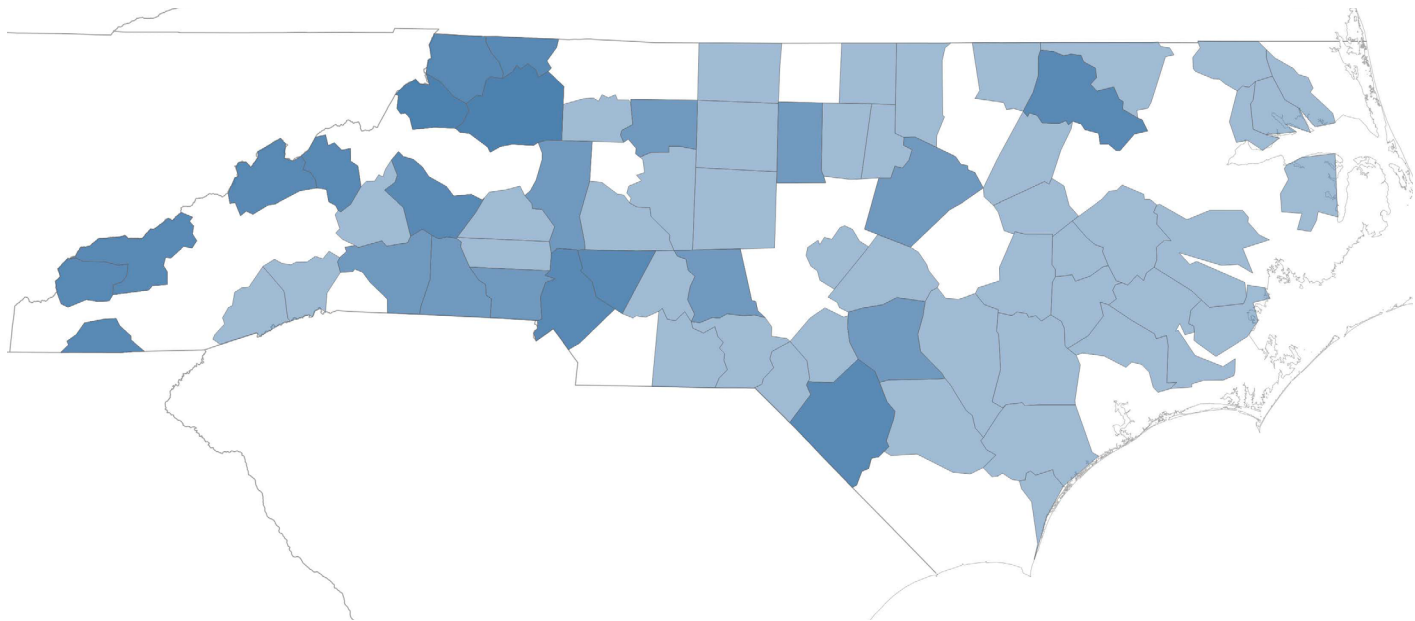
*Note.* Dark blue = 4+; Medium = 3; Medium light = 2; Light blue = 1; White = 0

**Figure 8. Connecting Students to Internships**



*Note.* Dark blue = 4+; Medium = 3; Medium light = 2; Light blue = 1; White = 0

**Figure 9. Connecting Students to Apprenticeships**



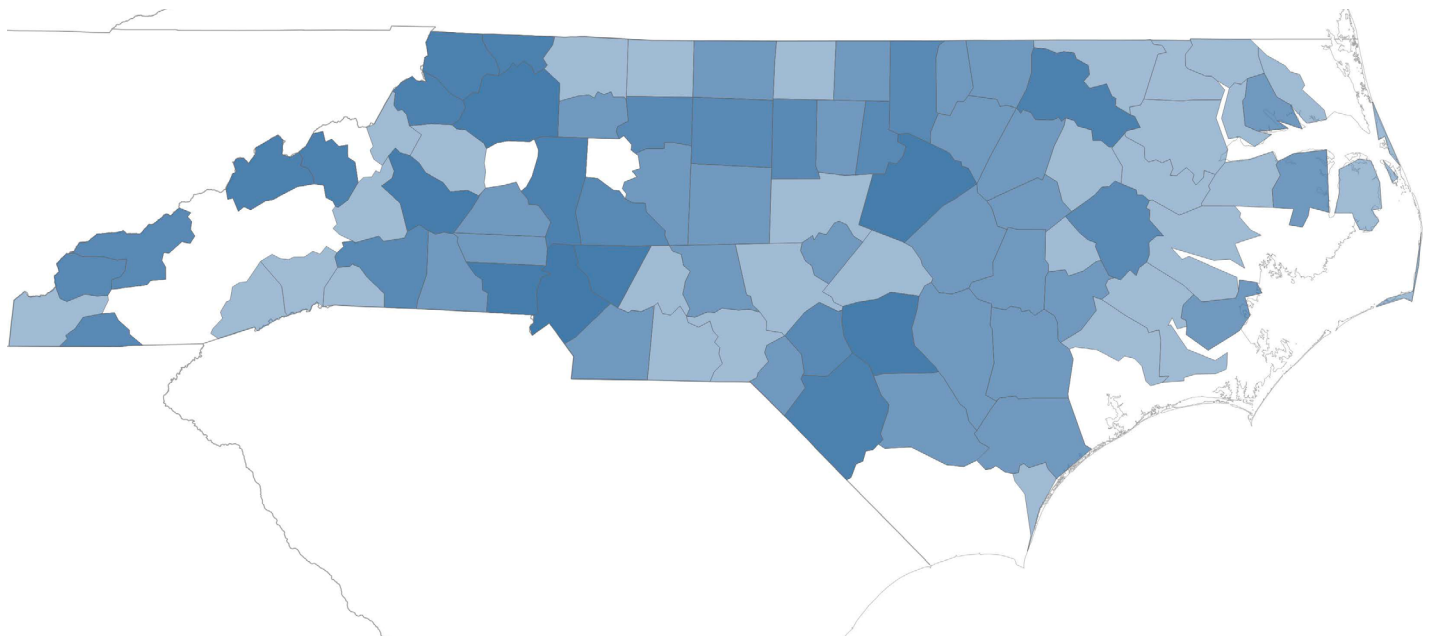
*Note.* Dark blue = 4+; Medium = 3; Medium light = 2; Light blue = 1; White = 0

***Educational settings, such as high schools and postsecondary institutions, played a key role in facilitating partnerships through shared initiatives, financial resources, space, data, and meetings.***

Many college access organizations developed close relationships with nearby high schools, community colleges, and 4-year universities. Some postsecondary organizations were co-located on a university or community college campus and reported to the same leadership position (e.g. Vice Chancellor) which further facilitated partnership opportunities. For example, at Appalachian State University, the various college access programs including GEAR UP all reported through the same department. Additionally, college access organizations partnered with admission offices and teachers at high schools to offer workshops as well as community college liaisons who work for the college to help high school students enroll in dual enrollment courses. For example, the Juntos 4-H Program (Juntos) and Student U spoke about focusing more on local partnerships (e.g. with high schools) rather than regional partnerships since many of their students stayed in the local area to attend college or enter the workforce. Organizations formalized these relationships with high schools by establishing memorandums of understanding with school districts. These relationships allowed the organizations to better serve students through sharing their limited financial resources, collaborating to deliver resources and workshops to a wider audience, and ensuring that their respective roles were complementary and not redundant.

***Organizations engaged with families when sharing information, planning workshops, or providing resources related to college and career access.*** Organizations such as Juntos, LatinxEd, Student U, College Advising Corps - Chapel Hill, and the College Advising Corps - NC State focused on planning initiatives with families in mind and engaging with families as much as possible. Interviewees shared that education is often a top priority for families, and organizations try to find ways for parents and families to better support their children. Families were invited to attend programs with their child, such as sitting at computers while completing the FAFSA. Some College Advising Corps use a texting technology tool to text information to families in addition to students. Student U focuses on intergenerational and a whole-families approach to support students and their families to become leaders that will transform their city for the better. LatinxEd invites families to financial literacy days and provides advice on how immigration status may impact financial aid in addition to offering sessions in Spanish. Say Yes Guilford offered webinars (200+ attendees), which focused on FAFSA completion, scholarships, financial aid packages, match and fit, and accessing campus resources. College access and career organizations recognized that interacting with parents and family members could strengthen the relationship they were trying to establish with students. **Figure 10** shows the counties in North Carolina where organizations operate who engage parents and families.

**Figure 10. Organizations Who Engage Parents and Families by County**



Note. Dark blue = 4+; Medium = 3; Medium light = 2; Light blue = 1; White = 0

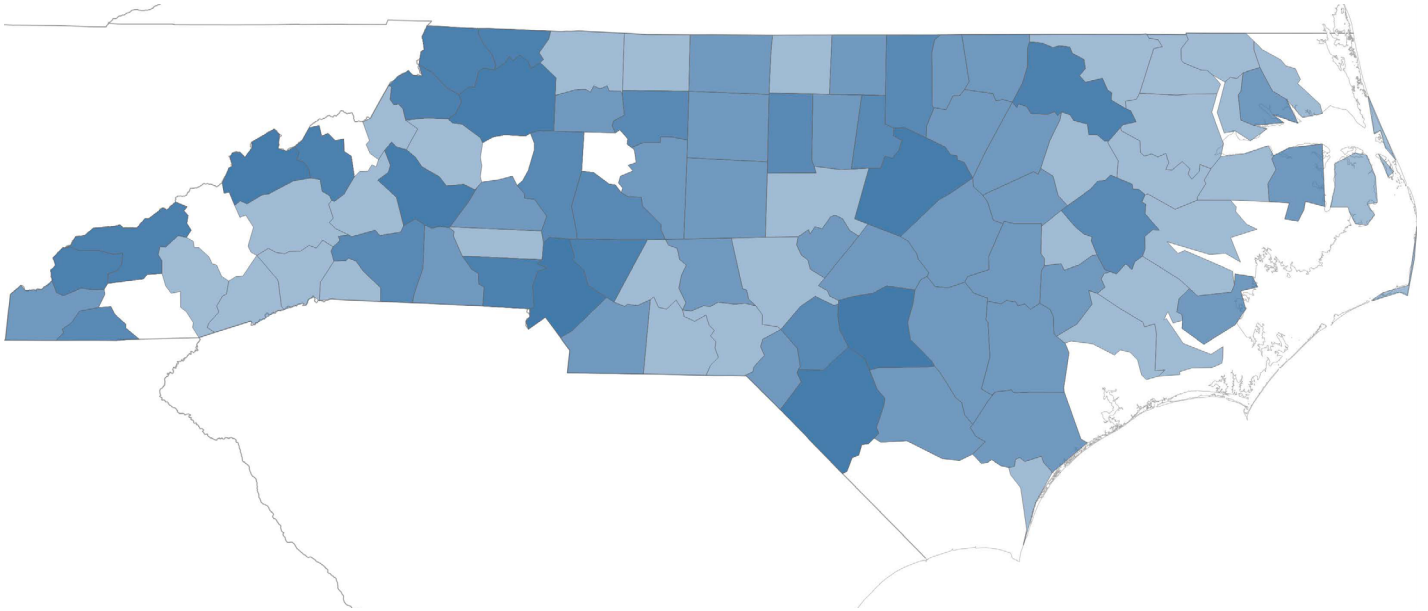
***College and career access organizations track outcomes and measure student success; however, many of the student outcomes overlap among organizations and could benefit from a streamlined network of student-level and shared information.*** College and career access organizations utilize many data tracking systems and performance indicators to measure the program's success. These data tracking systems include federal data systems used by TRIO programs, homegrown systems used by the College Advising Corps, and Microsoft Excel/Google forms used by many local organizations to collect data. Additionally, each organization collects similar information to measure performance and success. These organizations measure success with student outcomes that include college application submission rates, FAFSA completion rates, postsecondary enrollment and graduation rates, and other performance indicators. The number of key performance indicators tracked range from seven (College Advising Corps) to more than 30 (GEAR UP at Appalachian State and Communities in Schools - Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates).

Furthermore, these organizations help students access postsecondary opportunities yet vary in their access to student-level data. The data measured by the larger, statewide organizations are not available to the local organizations, limiting the extent of their services and analysis. One reason for the inequity in the availability of data for local organizations is the lack of affordable database systems for tracking outcomes and measuring student success. Lack of affordable and streamlined access to data leaves organizations without key information to improve student outcomes, resulting in missed opportunities that impact progress toward the attainment goal.

**Figures 11 and 12** show how high school and postsecondary progress are tracked by organizations across North Carolina. Given that most organizations work closely with the high schools, it is unsurprising that high school progress has the most widespread tracking compared to tracking of postsecondary success, which is more sporadic across the state. However, knowing that postsecondary enrollment is a key indicator of the success of college access organizations, it is notable that this information is less prevalent.

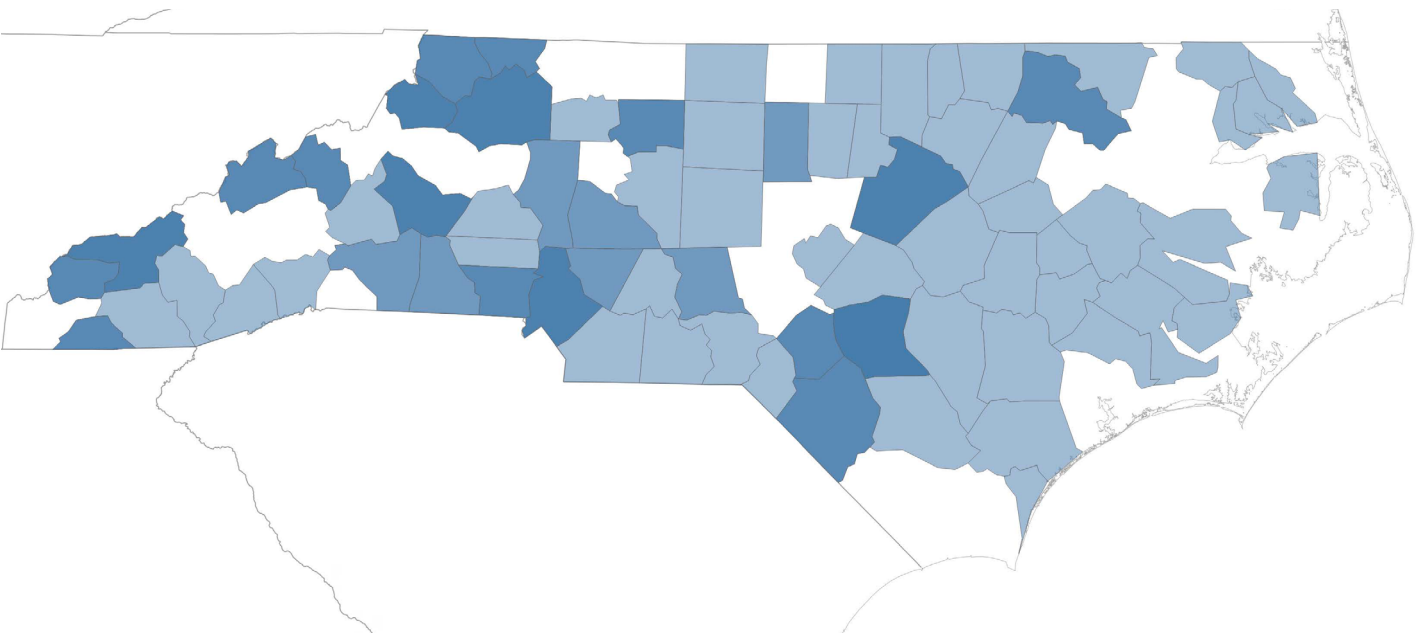


**Figure 11. Organizations Who Track High School Progress by County**



*Note.* Dark blue = 4+; Medium = 3; Medium light = 2; Light blue = 1; White = 0

**Figure 12. Organizations Who Track Postsecondary Progress by County**



*Note.* Dark blue = 4+; Medium = 3; Medium light = 2; Light blue = 1; White = 0

# COVID-19'S IMPACT ON PROVIDING STUDENTS COLLEGE AND CAREER SUPPORT

COVID-19's impact on education has caused undeniable shifts in instruction and learning, increased stress, and continued uncertainty around the world, in the United States, and in North Carolina. Data collection for this evaluation report occurred during the early months of the pandemic and the organizations interviewed were generous in providing context about how the pandemic impacted their work. Here are some of these impacts:

## Impacts on Students:

- » Leaders of organizations we interviewed expressed concerns about the social and emotional well being of students. Advisers, coaches, counselors, and CDCs are seeing increased anxiety and mental health issues in students as well as rising anxieties around racial justice given nationwide protests during the summer of 2020 following the killings of Black Americans by police officers including Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky and George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These killings were not the first but two examples of 400 years of continuing violence against Black people in the United States.
- » Other concerns expressed by leaders of college access organizations in North Carolina include worry about how students will transition between grades, health concerns, and increased financial, food, and housing insecurity due to family changes in unemployment. All of these concerns are exasperated by staff's inability to see students in person.
- » Concerns about access to broadband internet are also key during COVID-19. Not only are college access organizations relying on the internet to connect with students but the pandemic has highlighted the digital divide across North Carolina with regard to access to virtual learning.<sup>7</sup>
- » It was shared that high school students have been less engaged academically perhaps due to the online environment. However, advisers, coaches, counselors, and CDCs are responding to these concerns by engaging students in services to help students bridge the gap in instruction and school supports over the summer to ensure students are on track for graduation. Staff are also providing social and emotional support for students and working to find additional educational resources for their students.



<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/digital-divide>

**Impacts on Staff:**

- » In addition to concerns about students, leaders of college access organizations expressed concerns about the social and emotional well being of advisers, coaches, counselors, and CDCs. These staff members have large caseloads of students and supporting students through the pandemic has added additional responsibilities to their already full plates.
- » As the work of advisers, coaches, counselors, and CDCs has shifted to remote work, staff are trying to engage with students in a meaningful way in the virtual environment. Some interviewees reported that advisers, coaches, counselors, and CDCs spend substantial time on video conferencing per day in addition to managing other work and home responsibilities. New work responsibilities include delivering food or picking up/dropping off homework to students without the internet. Taken together these duties are putting significant stress on advisers, coaches, counselors, and CDCs.
- » In order to provide support to students amidst dwindling student engagement due to limited broadband access and lack of physical presence, staff are using social media, email, and text messaging to connect with students and parents.

**Impacts on Providing Support for College and Career Decisions:**

- » The shift to virtual programming has demonstrated new ways for organizations to operate such as state-wide virtual meetings and family nights, which allows for engagement in the broader community. For example, one organization has been able to maintain engagement through individualized outreach to students as well as leverage their relationships with students prior to COVID-19. In addition, this organization has seen that some events have exceeded engagement expectations indicating that students are seeking guidance on career and college decisions.
- » Organizations acknowledge that engagement will continue to change and they have to be ready to adapt to those changes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation highlights the interwoven web of partnerships that work together to impact the college and workforce decisions of North Carolina's high school students. Recommendations to strengthen this network and deepen its impact include a continuation of opportunities for collaboration between college access and career development organizations, expansion of a statewide network of resources, centering of the whole family in policy and programming decisions, and streamlined access to data.

### **Recommendation 1: Continue to create opportunities for collaboration between college access and career development organizations.**

College access and career development organizations serve similar target populations and operate with similar missions, creating great opportunity for collaboration. Though college access organizations across the state have funding differences, specific locale and organizational priorities, the organizations share a vested interest in increased collaboration to broaden their audience, share best practices, and better align goals to meet education and workforce goals. Several organizations expressed interest in building more local connections to business and industry to better understand workforce challenges and talent development. College access and career development organizations are both driven by workforce needs in order to create access for students to relevant postsecondary credentials and in-demand jobs. Partnering with local chambers of commerce, workforce investment boards, or economic development centers can assist the organizations in understanding the workforce in the local community and, therefore, better serve students. This presents an additional opportunity to strengthen education and workforce collaboration to ensure all students have access to high-quality and relevant educational and career opportunities.

### **Recommendation 2: Broaden the scope of services offered by a statewide network of staff.**

Opportunities to network and share resources are lacking as programs and services strive to reach each corner of the state. Specifically, there are five counties<sup>8</sup> where staff outside of school counselors, Career and College Promise staff, and CFNC were not identified in our search. These same counties, as shown in the figures, are also often the counties where additional support and services are not available to students. Services such as career development activities including employer visits, internships, and apprenticeships are offered sporadically throughout the state compared to more college-oriented services, such as FAFSA assistance, scholarship application assistance, and college application assistance. While there may exist overlap in services, expanding programs and staff support to these areas can ensure a broader reach of career and college support for all North Carolina Students. Finally, COVID-19 has highlighted the digital divide in students' virtual access to college and career assistance and should be a central consideration in future expansion of staff and services.

### **Recommendation 3: Center the whole family in the decision-making process about college.**

Centering the whole family is critical to the policies, programs, and resources that prioritize student success because college is a huge investment of time, money, and commitment. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights how parents, guardians, caregivers, and local community supports have filled in the gaps when access and resources are unavailable. The intentionality of family involvement was not widespread across the state, but the organizations that involved families recognized that family involvement often strengthened the relationships they were developing with students. They must be included in future policy and programmatic decision making as they are the backbone of our students' success.

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<sup>8</sup> Columbus, Onslow, Camden, Currituck, and Hyde



#### **Recommendation 4: Streamline access to student-level data and tracking of outcomes.**

The vast network of complementary and capacity building roles in these organizations share the same needs for greater impact: streamlined access to student-level data and consistent tracking of outcomes. For example, student course schedules so staff can organize meeting times, FAFSA completion and verification information to allow staff follow up, and grades/test scores so staff can provide relevant, individualized guidance to students. Valuable time is missed, application processes are delayed, and money is left unclaimed when students and programs do not have the necessary access to data. Organizations use student-level data to enhance partnerships within schools, but it was sometimes difficult to gain access to comprehensive data at schools. Several organizations noted that the cost for college access software is quite high. Lack of affordable software and streamlined access to data creates duplication of services and potential inequities in providing resources to students. Additionally, increasing the widespread tracking of postsecondary outcomes is important to understand the full scope of the impact of college access organizations' efforts. Involvement was not widespread across the state, but the organizations that involved families recognized that family involvement often strengthened the relationships they were developing with students. They must be included in future policy and programmatic decision making as they are the backbone of our students' success.

## **CONCLUSION**

Educational organizations serve key roles in preparing high school graduates for the future workforce; however, staff and scope of services offered are not equitably distributed across the state. The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated the structures already in place that created and exacerbated barriers in communities for increased college access and high-value labor market opportunities. As Dr. Pam Eddinger remarked in the Dallas Herring lecture<sup>9</sup>: "the pandemic revealed all the cracks and fissures hidden in the landscape and gave us a stark and unsparing look at the cavernous wealth and attainment gap before us." This evaluation report highlights that there are standard supports across the state through school counselors, the College and Career Promise program, and CFNC. These staffing resources and current scope of services are inconsistent across the state to serve the needs of students within the K-20 pipeline and into the workforce. Numerous organizations, highlighted within this evaluation report, have stepped in to provide added capacity. Though there are many dedicated organizations and staff members working diligently to increase college and career access, there are gaps in coverage by county and the types of resources provided. This evaluation report offers recommendations of where there are gaps in the scope of services provided to students regarding career and college access.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ue6j3jAps8s&feature=youtu.be>

## APPENDIX A:

### Data Collection and Sample

In order to identify organizations for this project the Belk Center evaluation team first developed a list of organizations that currently serve high school students and families related to college access and/or career readiness, use individual staff (e.g., counselors, advisers, coaches, and CDCs), and have a presence across the state. We defined having a presence across the state to mean 1) serving students in multiple LEA's (e.g. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction - School Counselors & Career Development Coordinators), 2) having multiple chapters in multiple regions of the state (e.g. College Advising Corps) or 3) programs that are run through a statewide agency (e.g., NCCCS Career Coaches or the UNC System Office GEAR UP Grant). This list was then shared with myFutureNC and the John M. Belk Endowment for review and suggested additions. Based on their feedback we decided to cast a wider net to identify organizations that may be operating on a smaller scale, only serving a single area, and do not have a state-wide presence. A survey for suggesting organizations was developed and shared with partners at the John M. Belk Endowment, myFutureNC, NCCCS Office, UNC System Office, and current doctoral students in the Community College Leadership Program at NC State. All responses were reviewed, and we first excluded any responses of organizations who were on our original list. Then we removed other duplicate responses to only count each new organization once. Finally, we reviewed the website of each potential organization to make sure they serve high school students in North Carolina with programming related to college access and/or career readiness. Of those initial survey responses, 15 invitations were sent for focus groups.

We determined to set up individual interviews with all organizations meeting the above criteria related to having a presence across the state and then hosted focus groups for the other organizations. In some instances organizations invited to participate in focus groups were interviewed due to scheduling conflicts.

Interested participants were asked to email their availability for an interview or focus group and complete a pre-interview questionnaire. The pre-interview questionnaire contained five questions regarding the number of advisers/coaches/counselors/CDCs in the 2019-2020 academic year, average cost per coach, primary services to support students, and frequency of primary services. Twenty-seven individuals expressed interest in being interviewed and 22 organizations completed the pre-interview questionnaire. One individual did not complete the questionnaire but wanted to be interviewed. The evaluation team gathered information from the individual verbally about the questionnaire during the interview. Interviews and focus groups took place virtually from May through July 2020 and lasted approximately 60 to 75 minutes.

The evaluation team asked participants to provide the following documents: job descriptions for the adviser/coach/counselor, program logic models, organizational charts, and annual reports. We collected documents from nine organizations. The evaluation team reviewed additional documents recommended by the leaders in the interview process. We were able to schedule time to talk

with 24 people. This evaluation report highlights individual interviews with 23 people: 14 people through a virtual face-to-face interview, 9 people via focus groups, and 1 additional person through an indirect interview (filled out questions and sent information but did not speak with them synchronously). See Appendix B for interview and focus group participants.

Finally, we were interested in learning more about the role of TRiO programs in the state. Using a [map offered by the US Department of Education](#), we narrowed our focus on programs designed to support high school students: Talent Search, Upward Bound, and Upward Bound Math & Science. We emailed the 40 programs meeting that criteria inviting them to participate in a survey about the primary services of their organization and the counties they serve. Of the 40 potential participants, 12 responded.

## **APPENDIX B:**

### **Interview, Focus Group, and Survey Participants**

1. Apprenticeship 2000
2. Buncombe County Schools
3. College Advising Corps - Appalachian State University
4. College Advising Corps - Davidson College\*
5. College Advising Corps - Duke University
6. College Advising Corps - North Carolina State University
7. College Advising Corps - University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
8. College Advising Corps - North Carolina
9. College Foundation of North Carolina
10. College LAUNCH for Leadership
11. Communities in Schools - Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates
12. Crosby Scholars - Forsyth County
13. Crosby Scholars - Rowan County
14. Crosby Scholars - Iredell County
15. GEAR UP North Carolina and GEAR UP Appalachian State University
16. GenOne
17. LatinxED
18. North Carolina Community College System - Career Coaches
19. North Carolina Community College System - Career and College Promise Liaisons
20. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction - School Counselors
21. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction - Career Development Coordinators
22. Say Yes Guilford
23. Student U
24. The Juntos 4-H Program

#### **TRiO Programs (Survey only)**

1. Academic Institute of Central Carolina - Upward Bound
2. Academic Institute of Central Carolina - Talent Search
3. Central Carolina Community College Upward Bound
4. Central Carolina Community College Upward Bound Math & Science
5. Gaston College Upward Bound
6. Fayetteville State University Talent Search
7. Fayetteville State University Upward Bound
8. North Carolina State University Upward Bound
9. North Carolina State University Talent Search
10. Southwestern Community College Upward Bound
11. Western Carolina University Talent Search
12. Western Piedmont Community College - Talent Search

\*After our interview with Davidson CAC, they shifted to supporting 16 advisers in 16 schools. They are no longer in Avery County or Williams Academy. The App State CAC picked up these schools from them due to geography and their close proximity to these schools.



## **APPENDIX C:**

### **Summary of College Access Organizations in North Carolina**

The provided descriptions are based on information learned in the data collection process and written to provide additional context for the evaluation report. The website link is included for additional reference.

#### **Apprenticeship 2000**

Apprenticeship 2000 serves in the following counties: Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, and Mecklenburg. Apprenticeship 2000 partners with companies to train highly skilled employees through Central Piedmont Community College. Apprenticeships lead to employment upon completion of the training and are available at no cost to the student.

#### **Buncombe County Schools**

In January 2019, Buncombe County Schools hired a Student Support and Transition Specialist to support the career and college access needs of the LEA. In this role the transition specialist helps to facilitate partnerships with local organizations including Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College and the local United Way as well as provide professional development opportunities for school district staff and partners. It is believed there are only a few positions of this type in the state.

#### **College Advising Corps**

The College Advising Corps (CAC) is a data-driven, national nonprofit operating in 16 states working to increase the number of low-income, first-generation to college, and underrepresented high school students who enter and complete higher education. Advisers assist students with finding the right match and fit, completing college applications, and applying for the FAFSA and other forms of financial aid. Additionally, advisers are often responsible for coordinating campus visits and bringing admissions representatives to the high school. Advisers work with school counselors and other partners to enhance the college going culture and increase student enrollment in all forms of postsecondary education.

The College Advising Corps in North Carolina has several distinct Corps that provide advising resources to specific regions or populations across the state. The ultimate goal of the program is to provide access to CAC advisers across all of North Carolina.

#### **College Foundation of North Carolina**

College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) is a collaborative of the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, the N.C. Community College System, the N.C. Independent Colleges and Universities and The University of North Carolina System, the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (Authority) and College Foundation, Inc. (CFI). CFNC promotes access to North Carolina higher education and assists students with education planning, career planning, and applying and paying for college. CFNC representatives support local communities through programming and presentations at schools, libraries, churches, or other community organizations to explain the college admissions process to parents as well as conduct training on career information to education professionals across our state, including assistance within career assessments and overall career discussions.

- **Appalachian State CAC**

The Appalachian State College Advising Corps currently has 18 advisers serving high schools in western North Carolina. Currently serving in the following districts: Alleghany, Ashe, Wilkes, Alexander, Avery, Burke, Cleveland, McDowell, Mitchell, Yancey, Madison, Transylvania, Jackson, Swain, Graham, Macon, Clay, and Cherokee.

- **Davidson CAC**

The Davidson College Advising Corps has 18 college advisers serving across central and western North Carolina. The Davidson Advising Corps serves in the following school districts: Avery County Schools, Cabarrus County Schools, Catawba County Schools, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Gaston County Schools, Iredell-Statesville Schools, Mooresville Graded School District, Rutherford County Schools, Union County Public Schools, Williams Academy, and Yadkin County Schools.

- **Duke CAC**

The Duke College Advising Corps has 16 college advisers serving high schools in central North Carolina. In the future, Duke CAC plans to add an additional two advisers. The Duke Advising Corps serves in the following school districts: Caswell County, Durham Public Schools, Johnston County, Lee County, Orange County, Person County, Sampson County, and Wake County.

- **NC State CAC**

The NC State College Advising Corps has 21 college advisers serving in 20 Title 1 high schools across rural North Carolina. The NC State Advising Corps serves in the following school districts: Bladen County School District, Duplin County Schools, Franklin County School District, Granville County School District, Martin County School District, Moore County Schools, Pender County School District, Perquimans, Pitt County School District, Washington County Schools, and Wayne County School District.

- **UNC Chapel Hill CAC**

The College Advising Corps at UNC Chapel Hills has 61 advisers serving 78 partner high schools. The UNC Chapel Hill Advising Corps serves in the following school districts: Alamance-Burlington Schools, Asheboro City Schools, Bertie County Schools, Caldwell County Schools, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Chatham County Schools, Cherokee Central Schools, Dare County Schools, Durham Public Schools, Edgecombe County Public Schools, Elkin City Schools, Granville County Schools, Guilford County Schools, Halifax County Schools, Hertford County Schools, Kannapolis City Schools, Lenoir County Public Schools, Lexington City Schools, Mount Airy City Schools, Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools, Pamlico County Schools, Pitt County School District, Polk County Schools, Public Schools of Robeson County, Randolph County Schools, Rockingham County Schools, Rowan-Salisbury Schools, Scotland County Schools, Stokes County Schools, Surry County Schools, Thomasville City Schools, Tyrrell County Schools, Vance County Schools, Warren County Schools, Weldon City Schools, and Wilson County Schools.

### **College LAUNCH for Leadership**

Wake Forest University's College LAUNCH for Leadership is a free, nine-month program that focuses on college prep, social justice, and leadership development. The program has two cohorts based out of the Charlotte and Winston-Salem campuses and serves high school juniors in Charlotte, Winston-Salem, and surrounding communities. College LAUNCH specifically serves students from groups who have been historically excluded from higher education.

### **Communities in Schools - Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates**

Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates (JNCG) is a Communities In Schools of North Carolina program focused on preparing 11th and 12th graders for college and careers through engagement in a competency-based in school classroom elective. This program helps students stay in school through graduation, pursue post-secondary education, and secure quality entry-level jobs leading to career advancement opportunities and includes a full 12 months of support post-graduation to ensure successful transitions. JNCG is an initiative of NC Job Ready, Governor Cooper's workforce development initiative to ensure North Carolinians are ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

### **Crosby Scholars Community Partnership**

The Crosby Scholars program helps increase college access by preparing 6th-12th grade students academically, financially, and personally. This goal is accomplished through providing enrichment workshops, participation in community service, advisory services, career and college exploration in addition to the provision of scholarship funding. The Crosby Scholars Community Partnership is located in the following counties: Forsyth, Iredell, and Rowan.

### **GEAR UP**

GEAR UP provides the following services: comprehensive mentoring and outreach; financial aid information for cohort students; encourages rigorous coursework and curricula; aims to improve the number of students graduating from high school, completing college applications, and enrolling in postsecondary education. GEAR UP engages students in partner schools starting in the 6th grade, providing students with academic readiness and college access support throughout their middle and high school careers. There are several current and former GEAR UP grants active within North Carolina.

- **[Appalachian State University GEAR UP \(2014-2021\) NC Partnership Grant](#)**
  - » Serves Alleghany, Ashe, Burke, Clay, Graham, Madison, Rutherford, Swain, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties
- **[Appalachian State University GEAR UP \(2020-2027\) NC Partnership Grant](#)**
  - » Serves Alleghany, Ashe, Burke, Clay, Graham, Madison, Swain, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties
- **[Fayetteville State University GEAR UP \(2017-2025\) NC Partnership Grant](#)**
- **[Iredell-Statesville Schools GEAR UP \(2018-2025\) PERSISTENCE Grant](#)**
- **[UNC System GEAR UP \(2012-2019\) NC State Grant](#)**
- **[UNC System GEAR UP \(2019-2026\) NC State Grant](#)**

### **GenOne**

GenOne operates in Mecklenburg County and focuses on helping first-generation students navigate to and through college. They identify high-performing, rising seventh graders attending high-poverty public schools and involve students and their families in year-round academic and cultural programming through high school graduation. They also offer cohort experiences, life skills training, and mentoring relationships through the Navigator program.

## **LatinxEd**

LatinxEd aims to uplift voices and leadership of Latinx immigrants across North Carolina. LatinxEd works with middle and high school students helping students navigate structural barriers (e.g., financial aid documentation, racial climate, leadership development) on their postsecondary pathway. They provide targeted, multi-year support to Latinx students and immigrant families striving for higher education and greater opportunity. LatinxEd serves students in Lee and Orange counties.

## **North Carolina Community College System**

The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) oversees North Carolina's 58 public, 2-year, technical, and community colleges. NCCCS has several initiatives to support college and career readiness and exploration including Career Coaches and Career and College Promise - the state's dual enrollment program.

- **Career Coaches**

The Career Coaches program from NCCCS places coaches in high schools working with public school personnel across North Carolina to assist students in developing career pathways and in encouraging students to attend community colleges to receive the necessary training for that career choice. The Career Coaches operate in the following counties: Alamance, Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Bladen, Brunswick, Burke, Caldwell, Carteret, Caswell, Catawba, Chatham, Cleveland, Cumberland, Davidson, Davie, Durham, Edgecombe, Forsyth, Gaston, Granville, Greene, Halifax, Harnett, Haywood, Henderson, Hickory, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Lincoln, Martin, McDowell, Mitchell, New Hanover, Pamlico, Pender, Person, Pitt, Randolph, Robeson, Rowan, Rutherford, Surry, Warren, Watagua, Wilkes, and Yancey.

- **Career and College Promise (CCP)**

CCP provides three pathways to help advance students' post high-school success. College transfer pathways provide tuition-free course credits toward a variety of associate degrees that will transfer to any UNC System or participating private college or university. Career and Technical Education pathways provide course credits toward a certificate, diploma, or state or industry recognized workforce credential. Cooperative innovative high schools allow students to earn college credits as a high school student. Qualified high school students in North Carolina have the opportunity to pursue these options, tuition free, while they attend high school.

## **North Carolina Department of Public Instruction**

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is charged with implementing the state's public school laws for North Carolina's K-12 public schools at the direction of the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. DPI has several initiatives to promote college and career access including CDCs and school counselors. DPI also maintains all of the student and school performance data for the state and administers annual state and federal public school funding. Additionally, NCDPI provides technical assistance, professional development, and other support for best practices. NCDPI does not employ school counselors or work directly with students. School employment decisions are made at the local level.



### **Say Yes Guilford**

Say Yes Guilford operates in Guilford County providing tuition scholarships so that public high school graduates can complete a postsecondary education. Say Yes Guilford is committed to providing access to support services and scholarships designed to prepare Guilford County Schools' students for success in college, career, and life. Say Yes Guilford leverages community support and volunteers to help students along the way and provide additional resources such as tutoring, legal assistance, and health services.

### **Student U**

Student U serves students in Durham County and focuses on helping first-generation students attend college. Student U engages the whole family to support the students in the college-going process in addition to providing additional resources such as tutoring. They are a community organization that uses the power of education, advocacy, and leadership to build a just and equitable Durham.

### **Talent Search**

The Talent Search program identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The program provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages them to graduate from high school and continue on to and complete their postsecondary education. The program publicizes the availability of financial aid and assisting participants with the postsecondary application process. Talent Search also encourages persons who have not completed education programs at the secondary or postsecondary level to enter or reenter and complete postsecondary education. The goal of Talent Search is to increase the number of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds who complete high school and enroll in and complete their postsecondary education.

### **The Juntos 4-H Program**

The Juntos 4-H Program (Juntos) works primarily with low-income, mid-level achieving Latinx students and families to provide knowledge and resources to aid students in completing high school and continuing on to pursue a higher education degree. Juntos coaches (COORDINATOR) provide a multitude of services including an extensive workshop curriculum for middle and school for students and families, Juntos 4-H Clubs, academic success coaching and mentoring, and Summer Academy (a summer college experience at North Carolina State University). The Juntos model strongly emphasizes parent/family engagement as well as fostering community among Juntos participants within the schools and across North Carolina. Juntos is currently active in the following counties: Bladen, Catawba, Pender, Sampson, Wake, Watauga, Wayne, Orange, and in 13 states around the nation.

### **Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math & Science**

There are more than 30 Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math & Science programs serving over 2,100 students in North Carolina. The programs are an important piece of the college access landscape. While all Upward Bound program operate a bit differently according to the specifics of each grant proposal, Federal regulation requires that, at a minimum, each program include the following services:

1. Tutoring
2. Academic Advising (secondary and postsecondary course selection)

3. College entrance exam preparation
4. Assistance completing admission applications
5. Information on Federal Financial Aid and scholarships
6. Secondary school reentry and assistance with entry into postsecondary education
7. Financial and economic literacy
8. Academic instruction in Mathematics through pre-calculus; Laboratory science; Foreign language; Composition; and Literature.

## APPENDIX D:

### Detailed Primary Services of College and Career Access Organizations

Organizations   Primary Categories	College Application Assistance	FAFSA Completion Assistance and Support	Scholarships	Career Development Planning	Internship, Apprenticeship, or Shadowing Opportunities	Employer Visits	Mentoring	Parent and Family Engagement
<b>App State College Access Programs (CAC, YES)</b>	Staff plan multiple events in October as part of College Application Week to assist students with completing college applications. They also work with students 1:1 and in small groups throughout the year to apply to community colleges and 4 years colleges.	Assists students with FAFSA information and deadlines depending on program.						
<b>App State GEAR UP</b>	Staff plan multiple events in October as part of College Application Week to assist students with completing college applications. They also work with students 1:1 and in small groups throughout the year to apply to community colleges, 4 year colleges, and job training programs. Institutions of higher education provide support through essay writing seminars, admissions simulations, and other services provided.	Staff work 1-1 with students and parents while also providing passive and active resources to educate students about the value of completing the FAFSA. IHEs provide support for district FAFSA workshops.	GEAR UP staff help students understand various components of the scholarship search process including when to begin searching, how to write quality essays, how to get recommendations from teachers and counselors, and where to look for scholarships.	Districts use various programs and services to help students explore careers. Programs such as Naviance, Virtual Job Shadow, Big Future, and CFNC provide personality assessments and career interest surveys. Also, GEAR UP often supplements CTE courses to help students explore careers through academics.	Some districts support internships by having connections with local businesses to educate students about careers in the area.	Some districts have implemented successful bus tours that take students around to area employers to learn more about local industries, required education, and what work happens at each business. Employer visits are often include a trip to a local community college to help connect college to career.	Mentoring is approached in several different ways throughout the program. Some schools pair students up with staff members, some employ near peer programs, and others use community agencies that specialize in mentoring to set up mentoring relationships with their students. Some mentoring programs take place face-to-face, and others take place virtually through texting/ phone calls/emails.	Family events are centered around all of the aspects of college access from defining postsecondary education, to pursuing and funding it, to being successful once students pursue postsecondary education. Most events are evening programs and recently virtual programs have been administered to reach more families.

<b>Apprenticeship 2000</b>	Works very closely with Central Piedmont Community College since the students are enrolled in the programs as well.	Apprenticeship 2000 member companies visit many of the high schools in our area to educate students about the opportunities in apprenticeships. Also, as part of the recruiting process we bring students into the companies for them to see the company and the jobs we are talking about.	Most apprentices start during high school so their tuition is paid, books are paid, they get a salary, throughout the whole apprenticeship-if someone starts late-the company pays the tuition. While it is not called a scholarship, Apprenticeship 2000 pays for tuition, books, parking passes, and other expenses for students participating in certain apprenticeship programs.		Main focus of the program is apprenticeships, students also earn an associate degree in mechatronics from Central Piedmont Community College.	Apprenticeship 2000 member companies visit many of the high schools in our area to educate students about the opportunities in apprenticeships. Also, as part of the recruiting process we bring students into the companies for them to see the company and the jobs we are talking about.		Part of our recruiting process is an Open House on a Saturday morning. In order for a student to attend the Open House they have to bring at least one parent or guardian. We want to make sure we have direct contact with the parents/guardians so they fully understand what the apprenticeship program is about and to make sure the student has the support from the parents/guardians.
<b>Career Coaches NCCCS</b>	Lots of classroom presentations early on. Students also do career assessments and have 1:1 meetings to help develop plans.							
<b>Career Development Coordinators</b>	CDCs work with school counselors; participate in Junior and Senior meetings - varies with each school. CDCs provide college visits, classroom presentations, career assessments, have 1:1 meeting to help develop plans, assist with essays and letters of reference, exploratory trips, help with FASFA and RDS, coordinate in-school college representative visits and presentations. Focus on informing students about careers and pathway connections to WBL.	Provide FASFA nights in collaboration with School Counselors, which helps lead to FASFA completion assistance with students or families. Assist students with FASFA completion information and deadlines.	CDCs may work with school counselors; varies with each school. Provide information on various unique scholarship opportunities, contacts, and deadlines.	Provide classroom and 1:1 session on Career Development plans, often working in collaboration with Student Services or in CTE classes. Uses CFNC, NCcareers.org, and other assessment tools with students to help gauge interests and connect with pathways of interest, goals, WBL, and local courses for academic planning and registration.	CTE Program --> Big emphasis on work-based learning in high school. Makes sure all curriculum has work-based learning opportunities from internships, apprenticeships, or shadowing.	CDC is main contact within schools and district for business and industry connections and career/LMI information. Host on and off-campus visits, bring in alumni, engage with employers, and conduct mock interviews. Employer presentations provide LMI, education, and career related requirements and opportunities. Employer visits lead to WBL and Mentoring contacts.	Connect students with parents, schoolwide and CTE alumni, and local business and industry contacts. Provide success coaching and mentoring. CDC provides essential employability skills workshops. Collaborates with School Counselor and CTE Special Populations Coordinator (SPC) for support on community services for diverse population needs related to career support, such as business attire for interviews.	Various resources available to give information including the Pathways website which lays out career pathways and credentials-will send to parents and students. When providing sessions for students and families, they're also providing interpreters, both sign language and Spanish speaking participants.

<b>College Advising Corps</b>	College Visits, RDS assistance, answer questions about applications and assist with essays, and talk about different admissions requirements.	FAFSA nights (tailored to meet needs of students/families), which helps lead to FAFSA completion assistance with students or families. Assistance with FSA ID creation (remembering passwords).	Supports students in identifying and applying for scholarships.	Help students develop and start to think about personal plans through 1:1 meetings.			Connect students with Alumni of the high school.	Engage parents and families through various activities.
<b>College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC)</b>	CFNC puts on Countdown to College and College Application Weeks; we have Reps who help in the classroom with application assistance year-round; we also house most NC college applications on our website. Through our newly-formed CFNC HBCU Committee, we have a series of virtual presentations offered next month on topics like student loan repayment, financial literacy, and building wealth. We are partnering with the State Employees' Credit Union, M&F Bank (first Black-owned bank), the NCCCS, Say Yes Guilford, Teach for America, and more to bring these programs to life.	FAFSA Day and runs the Finish the FAFSA initiative. Our Reps also hold FAFSA completion events across the state year-round. Additionally, we are partnering with myFutureNC and Gear Up right now on FAFSA Drive-ins in April.	Scholarship search tool on our website with over 100 scholarships that are mostly specific to NC students. We also administer North Carolina state grants & scholarships (i.e. Lottery Scholarship).	Offers robust career planning tools on our website, including multiple career assessments. We are working with NC Careers right now to offer a single sign-on with them for all career resources, including more assessments. Users will be able to log onto both websites with the same credentials, as well as save all career info interchangeable on both sites. This is set to go live mid-April.				Representatives work statewide on various parent programming, including free sessions on college admissions, career exploration, financial aid and financial literacy. These are held in the high schools during the day and in the evening, as well as in the community and places of employment; any place we can reach parents to help them through this process.
<b>College LAUNCH</b>	1:1 meetings help students explore the options of 2 vs. 4 year institutions, public vs. private, PWI vs. HBCU. Additionally, students journal on common essay questions and receive feedback to prepare for college applications.	Partner with financial aid experts to provide financial aid workshops to scholars and alumni. These workshops provide information on completing the FAFSA and comparing financial aid offers. Additionally, we offer 1:1 support to assist alumni and families with completing the FAFSA.	Host an annual scholarship workshop for Scholars, Alumni, and families to attend in order to learn more about the scholarship search and selection process. Additionally, we have an internal Scholarship Resource Library available to Scholars and Alumni. We also provide 1:1 support with scholarship essays and serve as recommenders on the scholarship application.				Provides 1:1 mentoring and advising related to professional and personal goal setting and progress. Community leaders serve as mentors to Scholars and Alumni on specialized topics throughout the program. Additionally, peer-mentoring through a collaborative/cohort model for Scholars and opportunities for LAUNCH Alumni to serve as mentors/leaders to current LAUNCH Scholars.	Families and students are invited to "Discover Day" at WFU. There are conversations about what admissions offices are looking for; and other topics such as financial literacy.



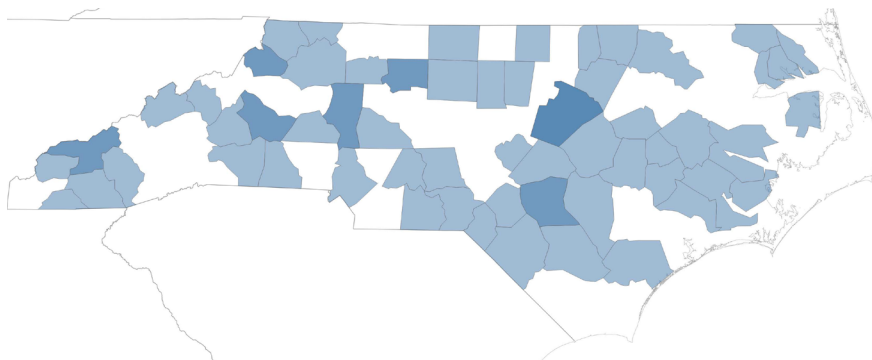
<b>Communities in Schools-Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates</b>	JNCG provides an introduction to various approaches to college using CFNC resources and then provides individualized assistance for students in the application process.		JNCG specialists refer students to available scholarship opportunities, support scholarship applications and provide letters of support to students.	Using a comprehensive curriculum, interest inventories and exposure to career pathways, students set goals that bring both individual aptitude and ability together to create viable career pathways.	Expose students to a multitude of job shadowing activities online in addition to supporting student work/study programs and career fairs.	Host campus visits, bring in alumni, engage with employers, and conduct mock interviews. Go on Saturday mornings to make sure that student gets to SAT test; interview clothing; inform employers of the program and how it teaches students (pre-met with employers); frequent follow up and problem solving.	JNCG specialists provide 12 months of transition support for students post-graduation to ensure successful transition and assist student in removing barriers to success after high school.	Throughout our time with students, specialists build family relationships. Schools often rely on JNCG to provide an information conduit from school to families.
<b>Crosby Scholars</b>	Every senior is assigned a one-on-one advisor and beginning to offer this service to junior Crosby Scholars in Title I schools. Confirm target list of colleges; discuss Early Action/Early Decision application plans; complete Residency Determination Service (RDS) online application; review SAT/ACT results and discuss additional testing; review admission/scholarship essays; identify scholarship opportunities; monitor completion of Senior Program requirements; meeting deadlines and communicating with colleges as necessary.	Support FAFSA completion with a staff Financial Aid Coordinator and FAFSA workshops.	Award scholarships and last dollar grants and have special support for students attending local community colleges.	Offer career exploration opportunities and are trained to administer the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test.		Offer worksite visits.		Offer family engagement opportunities in grades 6-12 through workshops, newsletters and student/parent portal in our customized software system.
<b>GEAR UP NC</b>	Partner with the CAC to provide advising opportunities in GEAR UP high schools, which includes college application assistance. Provide information about ACT fee waivers. GEAR UP VR tool. Partner with CFNC to provide support in Spanish.	Partner with the CAC to provide FAFSA completion assistance in GEAR UP high schools. Collaborate with CFNC and others to implement programs to increase FAFSA completion, and disseminate information and tools (English and Spanish support).		Utilize CFNC tools and information for career planning. Partner with the NCCCS to expand career coaching opportunities across NC. Partner with CAC to provide support in GEAR UP high schools. GEAR UP VR tool.	Partner with the NCCCS Apprenticeship program to expand apprenticeship opportunities in NC.		Provide postsecondary coaching and mentoring for students. Partner with CAC, which connects students with alumni of the high school.	Provide tools and information for parents in collaboration with school partners and service providers. Partner with CFNC to provide support in Spanish.

<b>Gen One</b>	Implements a college readiness curriculum and successful high school experience. Also has a contract with college access writing coach to help with essays.							
<b>The Juntos 4-H Program</b>	Lots of contacting and coordinating information and resources --> Contacts with most UNC School Admissions and some private schools.	FAFSA Night with Parents	Juntos annual scholarship to a Juntos student housed in The North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals.	Provide training/ guide for coordinators, worksheets for students to complete, and help students develop goals --> They work through their goals grade by grade. Provide career exploration through Juntos 4-H Clubs and Summer Academy/ field trips.		Panel and networking roundtables with students during Summer Academy.	Success coaching and mentoring	6 week curriculum for families that includes workshops, planning, education about high school and above. Year-round engagement through middle and high school workshop curriculum and family nights.
<b>LatinxEd</b>	Help students come up with college lists.	Offer bilingual FAFSA workshops.	Help students apply to and be competitive to private scholarships.					When providing sessions for students, they're also providing sessions in Spanish for parents.
<b>Say Yes Guilford</b>	All staff advise seniors as volunteers and work with students individually. They begin with students in January of senior year, talking about deadlines, admissions requirements, FAFSA, and look at financial aid offers in order to have financial education discussions. Free SAT/ ACT prep courses offered to all CSC juniors and seniors.	Students are required to attend workshops (academies) to complete FAFSA- helps us get more information about who completes it.	Provides last-dollar tuition scholarships to eligible Guilford County Schools' graduates.	Planning for College Series (e.g., accessing cash for college, scholar Q&A, and maximizing summer experiences).				Free one-on-one family and student college financial aid package counseling.
<b>School Counselors</b>	College Application Week/Month; assistance with researching and selecting most appropriate college, minimum admissions requirements, application process, submitting transcripts, and letters of recommendation; College Signing Day.	FAFSA & Financial Aid presentations with Q&A and individual application assistance; individual student follow up to promote application completion.	Assistance with identifying and applying for scholarships appropriate for individual students; school scholarship awards report; NC School Counselor Association has an annual silent auction at conference from which the funds raised are used to support a small scholarship for a student planning to major in school counseling and professional development mini-grants.	Career and college fairs; classroom career awareness, exploration, and readiness activities; virtual and on-site college visits; assistance with career interest inventories; advisement in course selection/enrollment for desired career pathway.				Host parent nights (including FAFSA & Financial Aid); assist parents with the financial aid process; provide resources.

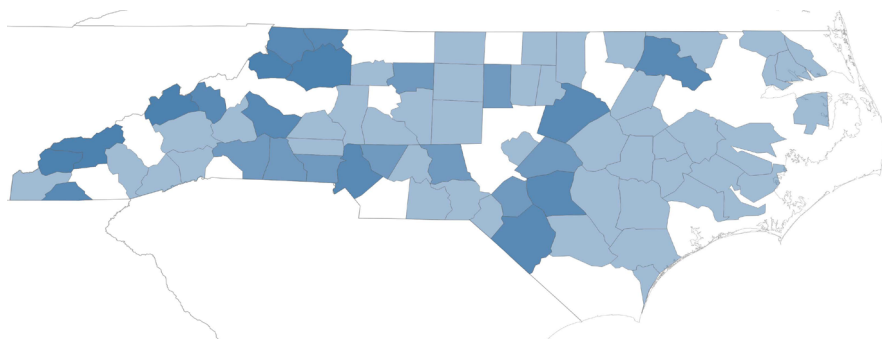
<b>Student U</b>	College tours, especially during preview days.	Host various FAFSA workshops. Students can meet with a college advisor for any other questions/guidance also help navigating family involvement.	Create bank accounts (i.g., students and their families opt-in in 6th grade). Student U deposits money into their account each year. They also provide help for students applying for scholarships.		Junior and senior students partner with other community organizations/places of work to intern. Students can also intern on Student U's campus during the summer.		High school students are partnered with "advocates" at their schools during the school year. These are usually full-time staff at their schools (e.g., teachers or counselors) who Student U employs part time and provides mentorship throughout the school year.	Takes a whole-families approach. Older students and families help coach other students and parents.
<b>Talent Search</b>	Development of senior individualized college and career plan, assistance in completing college applications including application, essays and personal statements, application fee waiver, ACT/SAT score reports, and transcripts, RDS assistance, and assistance with match and fit.	Support for students in families in creating FSA IDs, completing and submitting the FAFSA, completing verification processes, and navigating special circumstances.	Individualized guidance and support in the scholarship search and application process.	Development of individualized college and career plan in grades 9-12, Career exploration and aptitude assessment.	Virtual job shadowing opportunities, Connections to internship opportunities and support in applying for internships.	Virtual employer visits and shadowing opportunities, and employer visits to target schools.		Junior and senior parent nights for college and financial aid information and assistance preparing for and completing financial aid applications.
<b>Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math &amp; Science</b>	Upward Bound provides wrap around services to support students with the college admissions process. This includes college tours, academic advising, test prep, application workshops and one-on-one college application counseling and assistance.	Upward Bound hosts FAFSA completion workshops for students and families and staff follow up with students individually to assist with and ensure FAFSA completion.		Upward Bound hosts a Career Exploration workshop every year including, career assessments, resume writing, presentations from career services offices, and career panels. Through the summer programs, students may participate in hands-on workshops, visit job sites, and/or participate in research.	Many Upward Bound programs include an internship component. For example, at CCCC Upward Bound staff work with students to identify their career of interest and find an internship in that career field the summer before the senior year of high school. Upward Bound facilitates the internship experience and pays interns a stipend over six weeks.		Most Upward Bound programs include a mentoring component. This may include faculty mentors, near-peer mentors, or professional mentorships.	Upward Bound hosts multiple family workshops each year. This includes events such as FAFSA completion workshops, college application workshops, student orientation, and graduation ceremonies.

## APPENDIX E: Maps of Additional Services Offered by Career and College Access Organizations

### Award College Scholarships/Grants



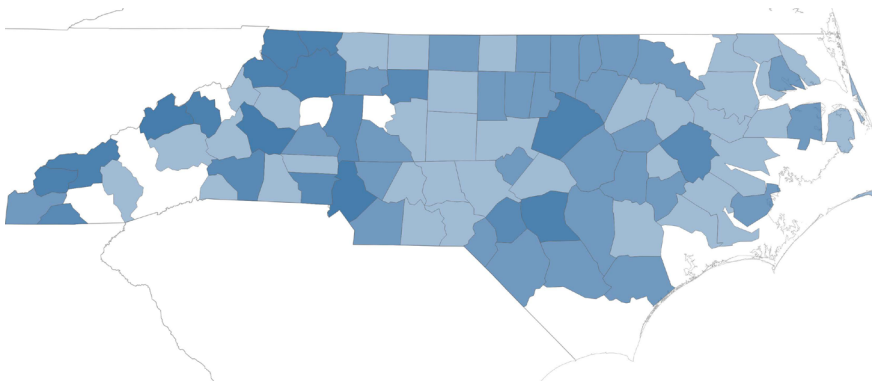
### Connecting Students to Job Shadow Opportunities



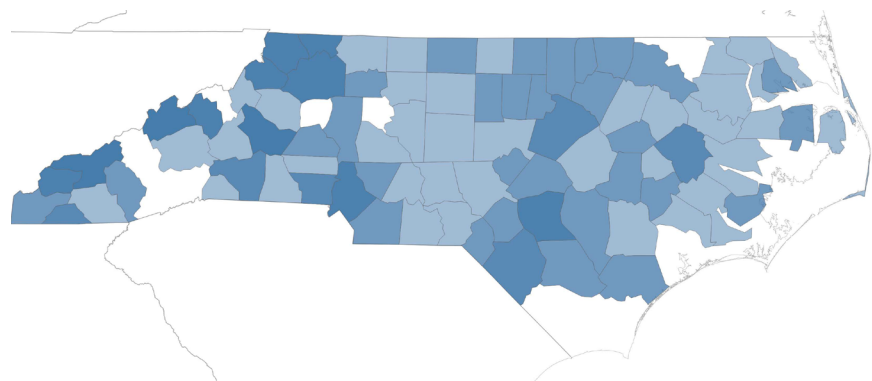
#### *Note.*

Dark blue = 4+  
Medium = 3  
Medium light = 2  
Light blue = 1  
White = 0

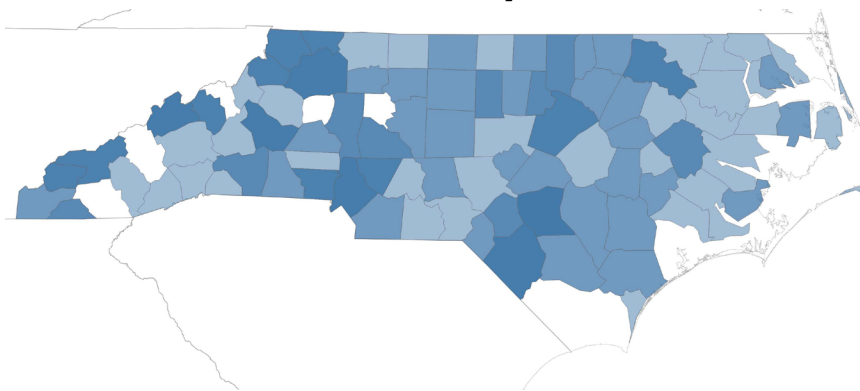
### Direct Parent/Family Contact



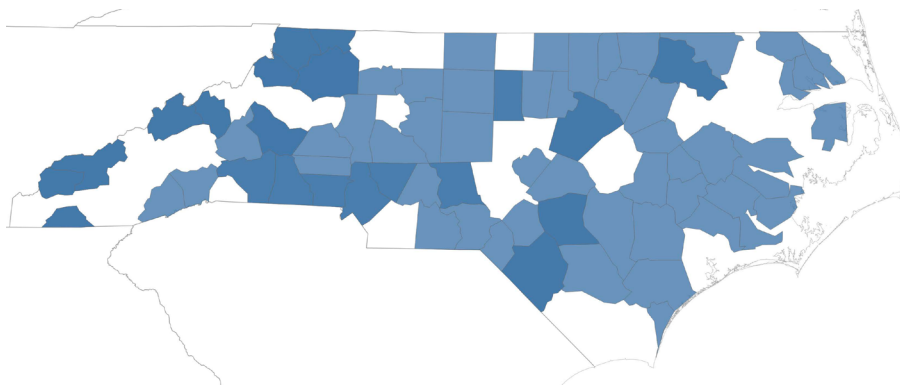
### FAFSA Verification Assistance



## Financial Aid Award Analysis



## Loan Application Assistance



### *Note.*

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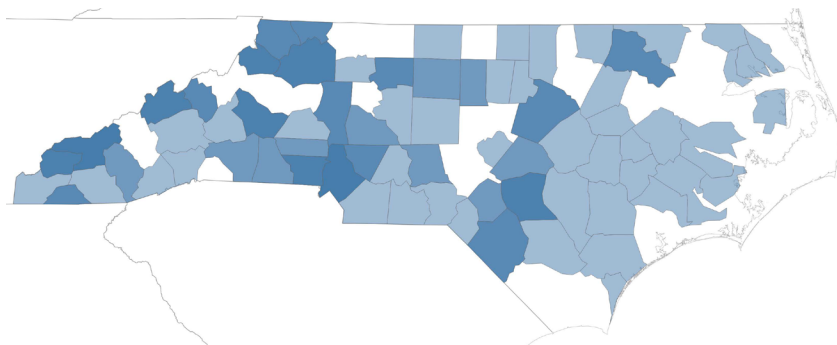
Medium = 3

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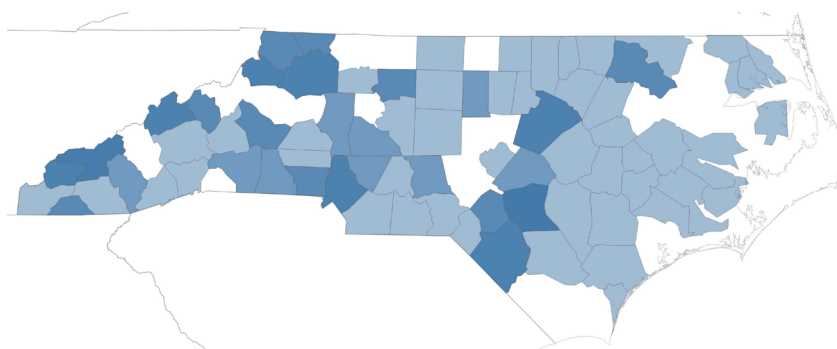
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## Mentoring

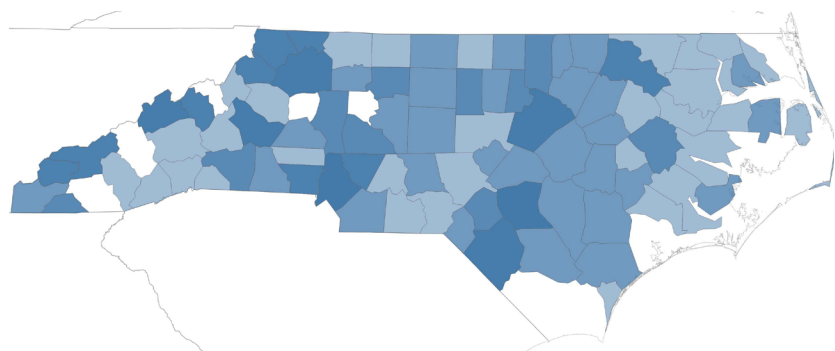


## Organizations Who Assist Students with Career Development Planning by County

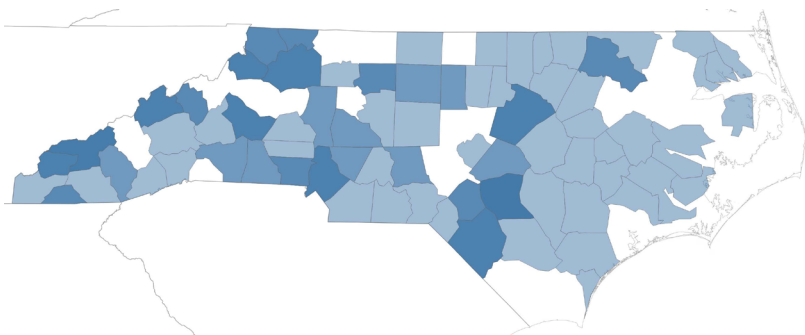




# Planning College Visits



# Tutoring and Academic Support



**Note.**  
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Medium = 3  
Medium light = 2  
Light blue = 1  
White = 0