

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL DRS45120-NGa-33

Short Title: Establish NCSTARS Grant Program.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Settle, Craven, and Johnson (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE NORTH CAROLINA STRATEGIC TRAINING AND
3 RELIABLE SKILLS GRANT PROGRAM TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT IN
4 APPRENTICESHIP AND PREAPPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AND TO APPROPRIATE
5 FUNDS FOR THAT PURPOSE.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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8 **PART I. ESTABLISH NORTH CAROLINA STRATEGIC TRAINING AND RELIABLE**
9 **SKILLS GRANT PROGRAM**

10 **SECTION 1.(a)** Program Established; Purpose. – There is established the North
11 Carolina Strategic Training And Reliable Skills Grant Program (NCSTARS) for the 2026-2027
12 through 2028-2029 academic years. The purpose of NCSTARS is to provide matching grants to
13 community colleges that partner with nearby public school units and local business partners to
14 develop a regional, work-based learning program to provide opportunities to learn and reinforce
15 key skills for postsecondary opportunities, including apprenticeships and preapprenticeships, to
16 students age 16 and older that are eligible for work-based learning according to the Department
17 of Public Instruction.

18 **SECTION 1.(b)** Program Participation; Grant Recipient Selection. – During the
19 2025-2026 academic year, the Community Colleges System Office shall, in consultation with
20 Surry-Yadkin Works, create an application for community colleges to receive NCSTARS grants.
21 The application shall be made available to all community colleges no later than 60 days after this
22 act becomes law. Applications shall be submitted to the System Office no later than 60 days after
23 the application is made available. The System Office shall select three community colleges to
24 receive NCSTARS grants no more than 30 days after the close of the application period. The
25 System Office shall consult with Surry-Yadkin Works when determining which community
26 colleges shall receive NCSTARS grants. The System Office shall prioritize the selection of
27 applicants whose applications include the establishment of programs substantially similar to the
28 Fostering Learning through Education, Employment, and Trades (FLEET) program operated by
29 Surry-Yadkin Works. The application shall include at least the following:

- 30 (1) A resolution signed by the board of trustees of the community college stating
31 their intention to participate in NCSTARS.
32 (2) A resolution signed by the governing body of each public school unit
33 intending to partner with the community college to participate in NCSTARS.
34 (3) Letters from at least five local employers stating their intention to partner with
35 the community college to participate in NCSTARS.



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- 1 (4) A detailed plan and statement from the community college explaining how the
- 2 community college will model their program after Surry-Yadkin Works.
- 3 (5) A plan to continue the program beyond the 2028-2029 academic year,
- 4 regardless of the availability of any State funds.
- 5 (6) Any other information requested by the System Office.

6 **SECTION 1.(c) Grants.** – Each participating community college shall receive grants
7 of up to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) for each year of NCSTARS. The System Office
8 shall provide matching funds in the amount of three dollars (\$3.00) for every one dollar (\$1.00)
9 of local funding contributed toward NCSTARS. Acceptable uses for grant funds include the
10 following:

- 11 (1) Stipends for students.
- 12 (2) Travel expenses for students.
- 13 (3) Staff salaries and benefits.
- 14 (4) Other expenses incurred in the course of participating in NCSTARS.

15 **SECTION 1.(d) Technical Assistance.** – Surry-Yadkin Works shall provide ongoing
16 technical assistance to all participating community colleges.

17 **SECTION 1.(e) Initial Report.** – The System Office shall report to the Joint
18 Legislative Education Oversight Committee by April 1, 2026, on the following:

- 19 (1) The community colleges that were selected to participate in NCSTARS.
- 20 (2) The number of public school units participating in NCSTARS and which
21 community college they are partnering with.
- 22 (3) The number of local businesses participating in NCSTARS and which
23 community college they are partnering with.
- 24 (4) The number of registered apprentices or preapprentices that have been
25 established as a result of NCSTARS.
- 26 (5) The anticipated dollar value of grants to be given out over the course of
27 NCSTARS.
- 28 (6) Any other information the System Office deems relevant.

29 **SECTION 1.(f) Final Report.** – The System Office shall report to the Joint
30 Legislative Education Oversight Committee by August 1, 2029, on the following:

- 31 (1) The total dollar value of grants that were given out over the course of
32 NCSTARS.
- 33 (2) An evaluation of the effectiveness of NCSTARS.
- 34 (3) The number of registered apprentices or preapprentices that have been
35 established as a result of NCSTARS.
- 36 (4) A summary of local government plans to continue their program beyond the
37 2028-2029 academic year.
- 38 (5) Any recommended legislative actions to continue or modify NCSTARS.

39 **PART II. APPROPRIATION**

40 **SECTION 2.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Community
41 Colleges System Office the sum of four million seven hundred fifty thousand dollars
42 (\$4,750,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year to provide grants pursuant to
43 Section 1 of this act. Funds appropriated by this section shall not revert but shall remain available
44 until the end of the 2028-2029 fiscal year.

45 **SECTION 2.(b)** Of the funds appropriated by subsection (a) of this section, up to
46 two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) shall be made available to Surry-Yadkin Works for
47 technical assistance. Of the funds appropriated by subsection (a) of this section, up to fifty
48 thousand dollars (\$50,000) shall be made available to the System Office for administrative
49 support.

50 **SECTION 2.(c)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2025.
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PART III. EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 3. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes

law.