

# **NCWORKS COMMISSION**

**Strategic Plan  
2017-2019**

## Introduction

The NCWorks Commission oversees the state’s workforce development system, develops policy, and advises the Governor, General Assembly, state and local agencies, and businesses on how to strengthen the state’s workforce. Each biennium the commission creates a comprehensive strategic plan for North Carolina’s workforce system that includes goals and objectives; an assessment of programs, policies, and delivery of services; and recommendations. The commission began work in 2016 to develop a new plan for the 2017-2019 biennium. This plan provides the framework for the commission to use to create a more aligned and coordinated system. This improved workforce system will strengthen services to individuals and businesses, and produce better outcomes.

## Mission

The mission of the NCWorks Commission is to ensure North Carolina has an innovative, relevant, effective, and efficient workforce development system that develops adaptable, work-ready, skilled talent to meet the current and future needs of workers and businesses to achieve and sustain economic prosperity.

The following functional areas drive the plan’s goals and objectives:

**Research/Data/Accountability.** Collect, examine, and share data to inform decision-making and drive workforce development strategies, conduct research to support system improvements, and ensure accountability.

**Convene/Strategy Development.** Convene state, regional, and local workforce system partners to encourage system alignment and develop strategies to improve the workforce system.

**Advocacy/Governance/Policy.** Advise state and local leaders on policy and strategies to strengthen the state’s workforce system, and review policies and programs to recommend actions that support and align the system.

**Promote/Communicate.** Increase awareness of workforce services across the state, identify and disseminate information on best practices, and communicate the benefits of the workforce system to job seekers and businesses.



## Goal #1: Engage the Business Community

**Concept:** *Understanding employer needs is essential to developing a strong workforce.*

**Business Case:** A strong workforce contributes to the success of North Carolina businesses and is often stated as one of the top reasons a business decides to grow or move its operations. Remaining responsive to the evolving needs of employers and preparing workers to meet those needs are key to developing a competitive, world-class workforce in North Carolina. The NCWorks Commission has a responsibility to support a workforce system that is relevant, valuable, and easy to access by the business community.

### Objectives

- Conduct a biennial employer needs survey to understand the factors impacting hiring, recruitment, and retention practices. Convene the state's workforce partners to share and discuss key findings.
- Review data to identify regional key industries and encourage regional partnerships to develop career pathways within those industries.
- Communicate and promote NCWorks business services to businesses and associations.
- Conduct research on employability skills including soft skills required by specific industries and identify best practice programs to meet those needs. Disseminate key findings to workforce partners.

## Goal #2: Advance Education and Training

**Concept:** *A skilled workforce results in a more prosperous economy.*

**Business Case:** Any state or nation does well to prioritize education and skills development as a key strategy for economic competitiveness. Higher educational attainment and skill levels have a positive impact on the career prospects and wages of individuals. Today, North Carolina faces a gap between educational attainment and industry's projected need for skilled workers. As such, the NCWorks Commission will support efforts around North Carolina's goal that by 2025, 67% of its working-age population will have education and training beyond high school in order to meet the needs of the state's businesses.

### Objectives

- Conduct research on available training programs in high-demand industries to help close the skills gap. Communicate the results to key partners.
- Identify and promote key strategies that impact valued credential attainment and support career advancement.
- Continue to promote and endorse NCWorks Career Pathways.
- Convene partners for the purpose of examining gaps in our workforce preparation systems and propose strategies for the commission to consider as key efforts in addressing the 67% statewide initiative.
- Advocate for key policies to help North Carolinians across all demographic subgroups get the education and training needed to be successful in the job market.

### Goal #3: Align the Workforce Development System

**Concept:** *An aligned system improves services to businesses and individuals.*

**Business Case:** The NCWorks Commission supports a workforce development system that is uniquely positioned to help develop talent and connect talent to jobs. A strong workforce development system consistently provides quality services, while meeting the needs of North Carolina's businesses and individual customers.

#### Objectives

- Use data to identify opportunities for improvement as well as gaps in services to customers.
- Support and promote cross-training efforts across programs and partners.
- Identify, support, and promote activities that lead to a more aligned system.
- Identify, support, and promote activities that encourage partnerships with economic development to include the provision of data and developing solutions to address key workforce development issues.