

Grants Available To Help Community College Students Finish Studies

By Administrator

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

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

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

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

A recent Wake Tech graduate, Adam Leach, benefitted from a program similar to Finish Line Grants and is now working as a nurse at UNC REX Healthcare.

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

The funding for this program will come from the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).