

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021**

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SENATE BILL 604

Short Title: Addressing Nonacademic Barriers to Success. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Crawford (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

April 7, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS NONACADEMIC
2 BARRIERS TO SUCCESS GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY
3 COLLEGES GRANTS TO SUPPORT STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND TO
4 APPROPRIATE FUNDS.
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6 Whereas, there are more than 300,000 curriculum, continuing education, and basic
7 skills students enrolled in the North Carolina Community College System; and

8 Whereas, there are more than 150,000 curriculum students in the North Carolina
9 Community College System who receive Pell Grant funds; and

10 Whereas, studies have found that 39% of college students at two-year colleges are
11 facing food insecurity and 48% are experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness; and

12 Whereas, studies have found that programs that address basic needs of students on
13 college campuses are correlated with an increase in college persistence and academic
14 achievement; Now, therefore,

15 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

16 **SECTION 1.(a)** The State Board of Community Colleges (State Board) shall
17 develop and administer a grant program designed to improve student academic success by
18 addressing nonacademic barriers impacting students. The program shall be known as the
19 Community College Support Student Academic Success Program (Grant Program) and shall
20 provide funds of up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to 10 community colleges.
21 All North Carolina community colleges may apply for a grant and both degree and nondegree
22 seeking students are eligible to receive services provided using grant funds.

23 **SECTION 1.(b)** As used in this act, the phrase "nonacademic barriers" shall include
24 the lack or insufficient availability and accessibility of:

- 25 (1) Mental health and other behavioral health services.
- 26 (2) Affordable and stable housing.
- 27 (3) Sufficient and healthy nutrition.
- 28 (4) Affordable health care services and affordable health insurance.
- 29 (5) Legal and other support services.

30 **SECTION 1.(c)** The funds shall be used to improve existing services or provide new
31 services to students to address nonacademic barriers to student academic success. The following
32 are allowable uses of grant funds:

- 33 (1) The provision of new services, the improvement of existing services, or both
34 to address nonacademic barriers to academic success for students enrolled in
35 the community college. This may include a "one-stop" service for students
36 who are in crisis or are otherwise at risk of not completing a course of study



1 due, at least in part, to nonacademic barriers. The service may utilize
2 individuals who are trained to assess student needs and assist students with
3 accessing appropriate services and community resources.

4 (2) Research regarding the improvement of community college student academic
5 success.

6 (3) The expansion of outreach and training on the community college campus to
7 identify and address the nonacademic barriers to student academic success.

8 **SECTION 1.(d)** The State Board shall develop an application process, including
9 metrics, definitions, and benchmarks, for the Grant Program. The application shall include, at a
10 minimum, all of the following components:

11 (1) Identify the nonacademic barriers specific to that college that negatively
12 impact student academic success and an inventory of existing services
13 currently available to students to overcome those barriers.

14 (2) Identify current methods the community college uses to measure whether
15 exiting services improve student academic success.

16 (3) Specify how the community college will use grant funds to address
17 nonacademic barriers to student academic success.

18 (4) Specify how the community college will measure the impact grant funds have
19 on addressing nonacademic barriers and improving student academic success.

20 **SECTION 1.(e)** The State Board shall take into consideration all of the following
21 when awarding Grant Program funds:

22 (1) The demonstrated need for services for students enrolled in the community
23 college with priority given to colleges located in catchment areas where fewer
24 mental and behavioral health services are available.

25 (2) Whether the proposal includes effective approaches for initiating or expanding
26 on-campus services that address the nonacademic barriers to student academic
27 success and student mental health.

28 (3) The extent to which the proposal targets underserved and at-risk populations
29 as defined by the System Office.

30 (4) The extent to which the proposal includes coordination with existing
31 community mental and behavioral health services and other community
32 resources.

33 (5) The extent to which the proposal includes innovative practices to improve
34 student academic success as defined by the System Office.

35 (6) The extent to which the proposal demonstrates the greatest potential for
36 replication and dissemination.

37 **SECTION 1.(f)** The State Board shall make all grant awards no later than March 31,
38 2022. Except as provided in subsection (h) of this section, no community college may receive
39 more than one grant for the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium. Each community college shall use at
40 least eighty percent (80%) of the funds awarded to pay for personnel. The community college
41 may use up to twenty percent (20%) of the funds awarded to provide professional development
42 to community college employees and acquire technology and other equipment and supplies to
43 implement the grant. The funds shall remain available for expenditure for two years from the
44 date the State Board awards a grant to the community college.

45 **SECTION 1.(g)** Each community college that receives grant funds shall report all of
46 the following related to use of the funds to the State Board and on a schedule to be determined
47 by the State Board:

48 (1) The number of unique services provided to students.

49 (2) The unduplicated number of students who received services.

50 (3) The types of services received.

- 1 (4) Of the students who received services provided with grant funds, the
2 percentage that reenrolled for the following semester or completed their
3 program of study during the semester when services were received.

4 **SECTION 1.(h)** The State Board may award up to eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000)
5 in additional funds to each community college that meets its benchmarks after one year and
6 requests additional funding. The community college shall use the funds to continue the services
7 for up to two years beyond the termination of the original grant, and the funds shall remain
8 available for expenditure during that time.

9 **SECTION 2.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Community
10 College System the sum of one million six hundred thousand dollars (\$1,600,000) in
11 nonrecurring funds for the 2021-2022 fiscal year to establish the Community College Support
12 Student Academic Success Program (Grant Program) to be allocated as follows:

- 13 (1) \$1,500,000 to provide funds to selected community colleges to implement the
14 Grant Program pursuant to Section 1 of this act.
15 (2) \$100,000 to develop and administer the Grant Program.

16 **SECTION 2.(b)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Community
17 College System the sum of one million one hundred thousand dollars (\$1,100,000) in
18 nonrecurring funds for the 2022-2023 fiscal year to be allocated as follows:

- 19 (1) \$800,000 to extend successful grant programs as provided in Section 1(f) of
20 this act.
21 (2) \$300,000 to evaluate the Grant Program.

22 **SECTION 3.** The State Board of Community Colleges shall report no later than
23 October 1, 2022, and annually thereafter until October 1, 2025, to the Joint Legislative Education
24 Oversight Committee on the following:

- 25 (1) The grant process, including which community colleges applied for grants,
26 which received grants, the amount of each grant including any additional
27 funding received under Section 1(f) of this act, and a summary of the services
28 to be provided by each community college that received a grant.
29 (2) Data, by community college, on the use of the grant funds over time, including
30 data regarding whether the programs and services have reduced nonacademic
31 barriers to student academic success.
32 (3) Recommendations for modifying, extending, or terminating the Grant
33 Program.

34 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2021.