



A Product of the Land of Sky
Educational Attainment &
Workforce Development
Collaborative of Buncombe,
Henderson, Madison &
Transylvania Counties



www.LOSP20.org

ALIGNMENT

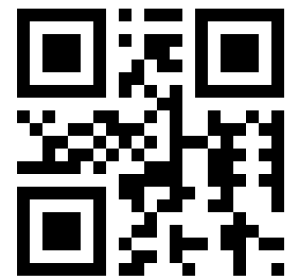
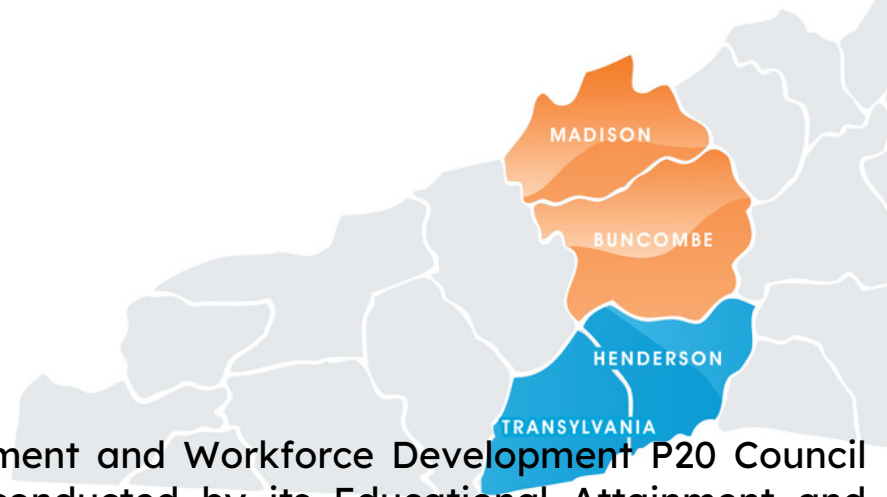


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Introduction



The Land of Sky Educational Attainment and Workforce Development P20 Council was formed after the initial work conducted by its Educational Attainment and Workforce Development Collaborative two-year planning process and the hiring of an Executive Director, Ms. Emily Nicholson. The initial planning process was initiated when thought leaders assembled in western North Carolina in 2018, after taking part in educational attainment discussions led by the Governor and the establishment of the myFutureNC Commission. After conducting a statewide conversation about economic competitiveness, workforce development, and educational attainment, the Commission established a goal of 2 million additional North Carolinians, ages 25 – 44, possessing credentials that lead to gainful employment by the year 2030, and the initiative was later signed into law by Governor Roy Cooper. myFutureNC’s bold objective was immediately underscored by the fact that currently less than half of the residents in the targeted group have a high-quality credential knowing that the vast majority of future jobs will require education beyond high school.

The Land of Sky Educational Attainment and Workforce Collaborative was established in mid- 2019 as a pilot program to lead a four-county region (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania) toward fulfillment of its portion of the state’s overall myFutureNC goal of 2 million credentialed state residents by 2030. To date, the Collaborative has worked with myFutureNC, Carolina Demography, the Education Strategy Group, and Fox Management Consulting Enterprises to develop strategies to “Connect the Dots that Lead to Educational Attainment and Gainful Employment.”

The Land of Sky Educational Attainment and Workforce Collaborative (the “Collaborative”) started their process by assembling Educational and Business thought leaders, including representatives from public and private four-year universities, community colleges, K-12 public school systems, economic development coalitions, and businesses. Thought leaders from all of these groups met in November 2019 to collectively begin the process of moving the Collaborative forward.

To continue the work, a Steering Committee was created, which included:

- Mr. Jack Cecil, President, Biltmore Farms and member, myFutureNC Board of Directors
 - Dr. Michael Dempsey, Dean and Director, Lenoir-Rhyne University Asheville
 - Dr. Laura Leatherwood, President, Blue Ridge Community College
- Dr. Gene Loflin, Associate Vice President of Instruction, A-B Tech Community College
 - Mr. Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director, Land of Sky Regional Council
 - Dr. Bill Sederburg, retired college president



- Pre-K Enrollment Initiatives
- CTE Career Pathways Initiatives
- Dual Enrollment Initiatives
- Work-based Learning Initiatives
- High School Graduation Initiatives
- College Retention and Completion Initiatives
- Educational and Workforce Competencies Alignment Initiatives

The Collaborative realized that the ability to make significant gains in the targeted educational and workforce attainment efforts must include an equity lens in which diversity, inclusion, and accessibility to all resources must be a major component of each strategic goal. The Collaborative led the charge promoting educational attainment, loosely defined as any credential valued by local employers, that lead to a thriving, life-sustaining, and fulfilling career.

The educational attainment work accomplished could not have occurred without the hard work of all of the stakeholders, as well as the gracious support of the John M. Belk Endowment.



John M Belk
Endowment
ELEVATE THROUGH EDUCATION



Who We Are*

- Ms. Amy Barry, Executive Director, Buncombe Partnership for Children
- Ms. Brittany Brady, President, Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development
- Dr. Kelli Brown, Chancellor, Western Carolina University
- Mr. John Bryant, Vice President of Workforce Development and Community Affairs, Pardee UNC Health Care
- Mr. Jack Cecil, President, Biltmore Farms
- Ms. Kit Cramer, President & CEO, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce
- Dr. Michael Dempsey, Lenoir-Rhyne University Asheville
- Dr. Mark Dickerson, Assistant Superintendent, Asheville City Schools
- Mr. Tony Floyd, President, Mars Hill University
- Dr. Joseph Fox, Fox Mgmt. Consulting Enterprises
- Mr. Reginald Gaither, Senior Manager, Human Resources, Meritor
- Mark Garrett, Superintendent, Henderson County Public School
- Mr. Norris Gentry, Interim County Manager, Madison County
- Dr. John Gossett, President, A-B Tech Community College
- Mr. Chip Gould, President, Cason Companies
- Mr. Mike Hawkins, President, Pisgah Enterprises
- Dr. Will Hoffman, Superintendent, Madison County Schools
- Dr. Rob Jackson, Superintendent, Buncombe County Schools
- Ms. Jaime Laughter, Manager, Transylvania County
- Dr. Laura Leatherwood, President, Blue Ridge Community College
- Dr. Gene Loflin, A-B Technical Community College
- Mr. Greg Lowe, President, HCA North Carolina Division
- Dr. Paul Maurer, President, Montreat College
- Dr. Jeff McDaris, Superintendent, Transylvania County Schools
- Mr. Michael Meguiar, Vice President of Global Operations, ThermoFisher Scientific
- Mr. John Mitchell, County Manager, Henderson County
- Ms. Avril Pinder, County Manager, Buncombe County
- Mr. Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director, Land of Sky Regional Council
- Dr. Bill Sederburg, Retired College President
- Ms. Carol Steen, President, WNC Human Resources Association
- Dr. Kimberly van Noort, Provost/Interim Chancellor, UNC Asheville

Greenery

**The Council was formed in 2021, and its by-laws require a change in membership on July 1, 2023 with members rotating every two years thereafter.*

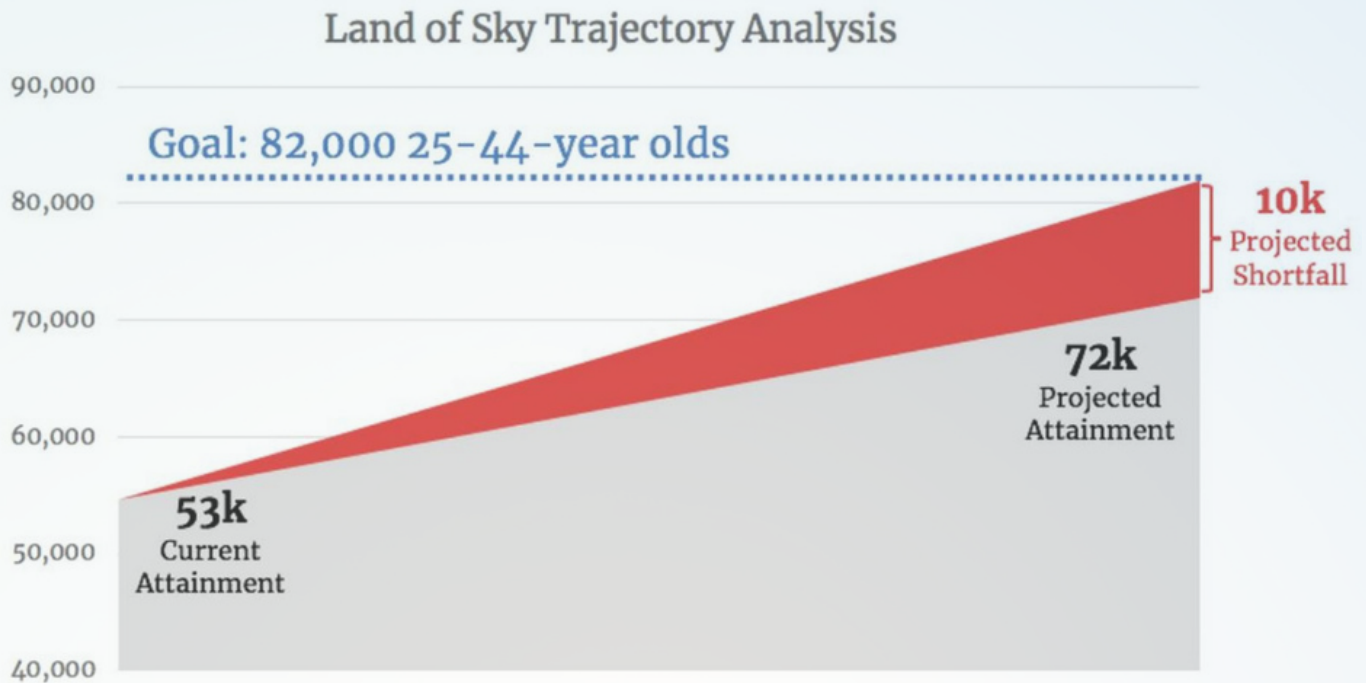


Starting with the End in Mind

The Land of Sky Educational Attainment and Workforce Development P20 Council started its journey to enhance educational opportunities that lead to a thriving and self-sustaining career in western North Carolina's four-county region of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania by convening thought leaders to brainstorm next steps. A comprehensive model was adopted that focused on the region's "best practices," stakeholders' engagement, collaboration, and collective impact. The P20 Council evolved from the original Land of Sky Educational Attainment and Workforce Collaborative's work of applying an equity lens to develop its mission, goals, and strategic plan.



What Does the Data Say?



The project's focus continued to be aligning educational achievements with employable skill needs of local employers. According to the Education Strategy Group (ESG), a Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm that specializes in educational attainment, the four-county Land of Sky region will need to have 82,000 residents who possess an industry-recognized credential that leads to employment by 2030. ESG determined that, at the current trajectory, the region would be home to 72,000 residents with such credentials. Therefore, 10,000 additional residents with employable credentials will be needed to "close the gap" between the predicted number of employees with required credentials and the number of employees needed by local employers. Pictured above is the Land of Sky trajectory prepared as part of ESG's Gap Analysis.

Establishing Plans

What are the assumptions we are working under?

1. Each of the four counties (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania) has a different landscape related to its economic, legal, technological, and sociocultural environment.

2. A regional approach to the strategic plan formation will allow each county to tailor the plan based on its specific SWOT analysis.

3. The COVID-19 pandemic will impact the educational and business stakeholders in different ways that will have a long-term impact.

4. Alignment must occur from cradle to gainful employment in order to achieve long-term project success.

5. Equity must be at the heart of all educational attainment strategies in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

6. Policies and funding priorities must be addressed for long-term sustainability of the project.

Project Management Approach

Utilizing project management and a collective impact strategy, the following steps were established to guide the planning process:

1. Project Definitions

- a. Overall Project Scope Defined
- b. Project Specifications Defined
- c. Project Ecosystem Defined
- d. Task List Developed
- e. Responsibilities Established

2. Planning Stage

- a. Resources Identified
- b. Budgets Developed
- c. Inclusive Team Assembled
- d. Listening Sessions Implemented
- e. Funding Secured
- f. Strategic Plan Developed

3. Execution

- a. Communication & Connections Action Team
- b. Credentials of Value Action Team
- c. Pathways to Enrollment through FAFSA Action Team
- d. Policies & Regulations Action Team
- e. Benchmarking (Data/Metrics) Action Team



The following educational attainment ecosystem was established to guide the project's comprehensive and equitable approach:



Hosting Listening Sessions

HOW?

- Convene stakeholders in a neutral location
- Use a third-party facilitator
- Avoid scattered, disconnected dialogue
- Ask targeted questions with specific participant tasks

WHY?

Discover “Best Practices” already in place, engage stakeholders in the conversation, seek input as to others that should be in the discussions, and gain “buy in” from each stakeholder

What are the external variables/factors impacting educational attainment, such as family support?

What are the internal variables/factors impacting educational attainment, such as student preparedness?



What are the policy issues that directly or indirectly impact educational attainment, plus initiatives including funding and technology?

Who are the advocacy groups that advocate for educational attainment, social and/or economic justice, human rights, etc.?

Engaging with State Partners

What's happening statewide that connects to our local efforts?

myFUTURE NC
2 million by 2030.

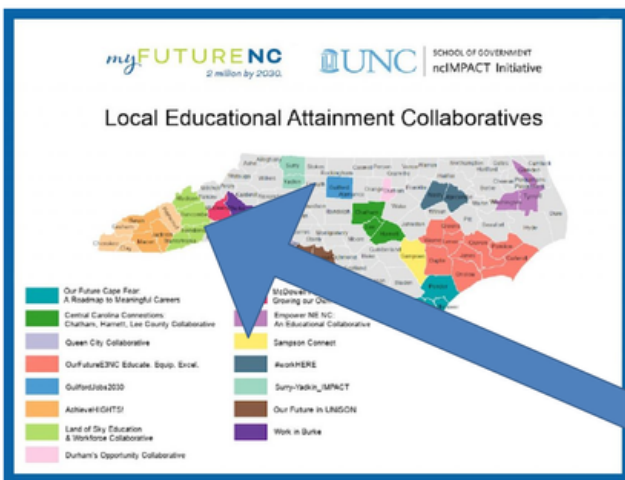
OUR GOAL



North Carolinians (25-44) with **high-quality credentials**
or postsecondary degrees

The Collaborative used the County Profiles provided by myFutureNC to guide decision making.

It also utilized components of the Collective Impact Model to establish a shared mission and common interests among stakeholders in order to align the needs of local employers' human talent pools to educational attainment objectives and outcomes.



The Steering Committee adopted the following CLEAR IMPACT Collective Impact Model:

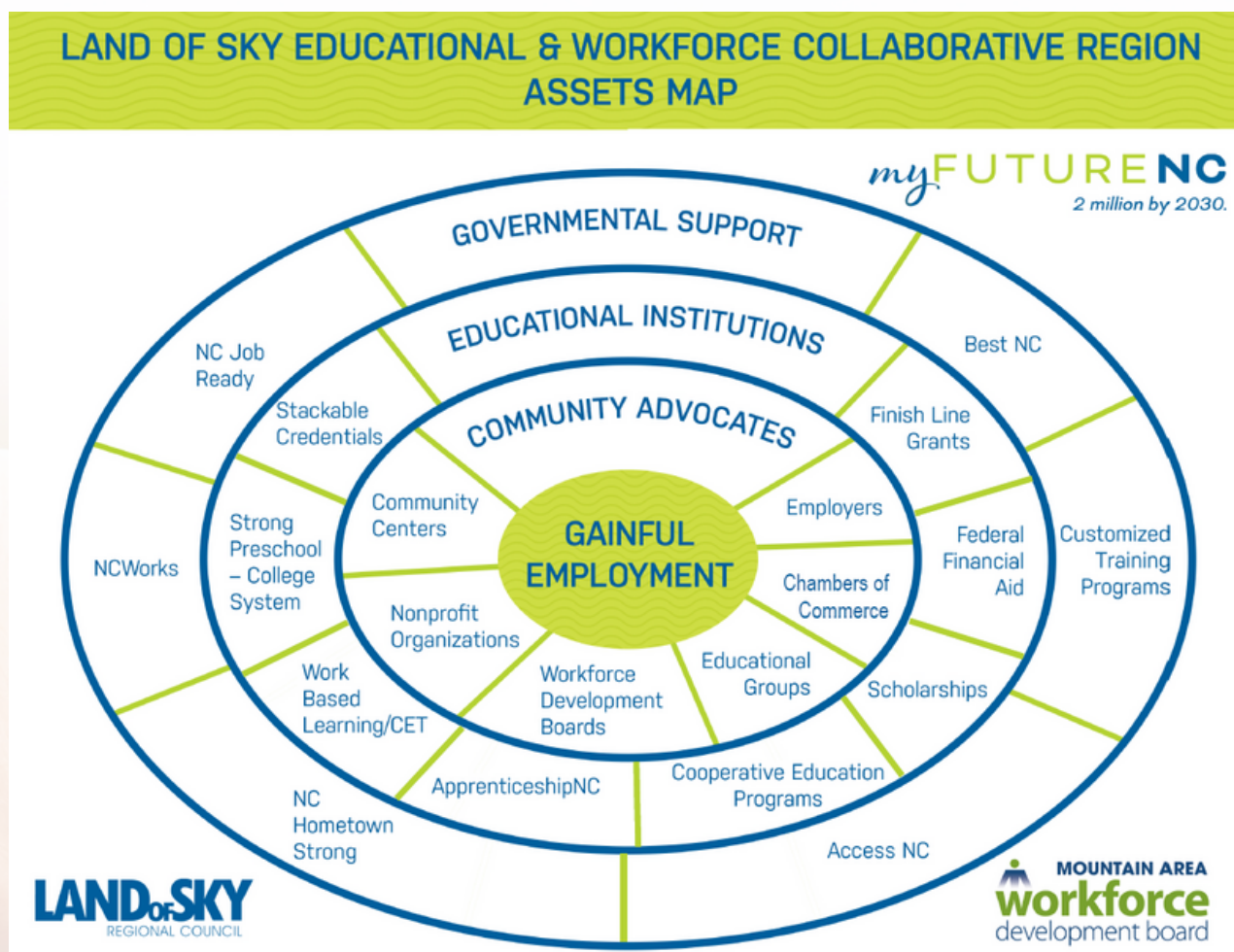
- Development of a Strategic Plan
 - Secured Operational Funding
- Partnered with myFutureNC and NC IMPACT
 - Created Resource Guides
- Participated in the development of the Regional State of the Workforce Survey
 - Secured Additional Funding
- Completed the P20 Council Infrastructure
 - Launched the P20 Council Website (<https://www.losp20.org>)
- Launched the P20 Council Action Teams

LOS P20 Council
Playbook



Identifying Resources

The Steering Committee realized that identifying community, state, and federal resources is paramount to the success, as well as the sustainability of the attainment project. The following Asset Map was developed in which Resource Guides could be created and added to the organization's website:



Listening Session Results



What did we learn?

The following “Best Practices” were established based on the listening sessions:

1. Align Pre-K and Early Childhood development initiatives to establish social and emotional skills that can be fostered throughout the educational journey.
2. Develop career pathways aligned with student aspirations and employers’ needs.
3. Tiered advising framework that provides a roadmap for aligned advising beginning in elementary school and aligned with stakeholders from educational institutions to local employers.
4. Establish or formalize regional partnerships in which K-12, higher education, and private sector leaders are represented to mobilize multiple stakeholders and advance alignment.
5. Connect employers to educational partners to support curriculum development or work- based learning experiences.
6. Target special populations such as re-entry, veterans, immigrants, and students economically or academically at risk.
7. Revise Placement Policies and Practices.

The Steering Committee did not want the project to be seen by educators as

“just another initiative.”

Developed 4 Strategic Directions

1. Enhance Pre-K and Early Childhood Education programs' enrollment.
2. Improve student success rates in K-12 education.
3. Improve postsecondary success.
4. Align educational objectives and outcomes to desired employee competencies.

Moving From Committee to Collaboration



Split into Workgroups for Each Strategic Direction

Workgroups were developed for the four strategic directions. A fifth workgroup was established to elevate policy and funding issues from each of the other four workgroups to the myFutureNC Staff. At least one Steering Committee member served on each of the original workgroups. Steering Committee members examined the list of stakeholders to invite them by area of expertise to participate in one of the workgroups.



Establish Workgroup Responsibilities

- Develop a Workgroup Mission
- Develop a Workgroup Vision
- Review Relevant Portions of the Strategic Plan (Goal(s) and Strategies)
- Establish Action Items for Each Relevant Adopted Strategy
- Establish Additional Strategies/Action Items as Needed
- Establish an Implementation Plan
- Establish Process for Onboarding New Workgroup Members
- Report Back to the Collaborative Steering Committee



Plan for Sustainability

The final portion of the model was to establish an organizational structure for sustainability. The P20 Council membership was established and adopted much of the early work conducted by the original Land of Sky Educational Attainment and Workforce Collaborative.

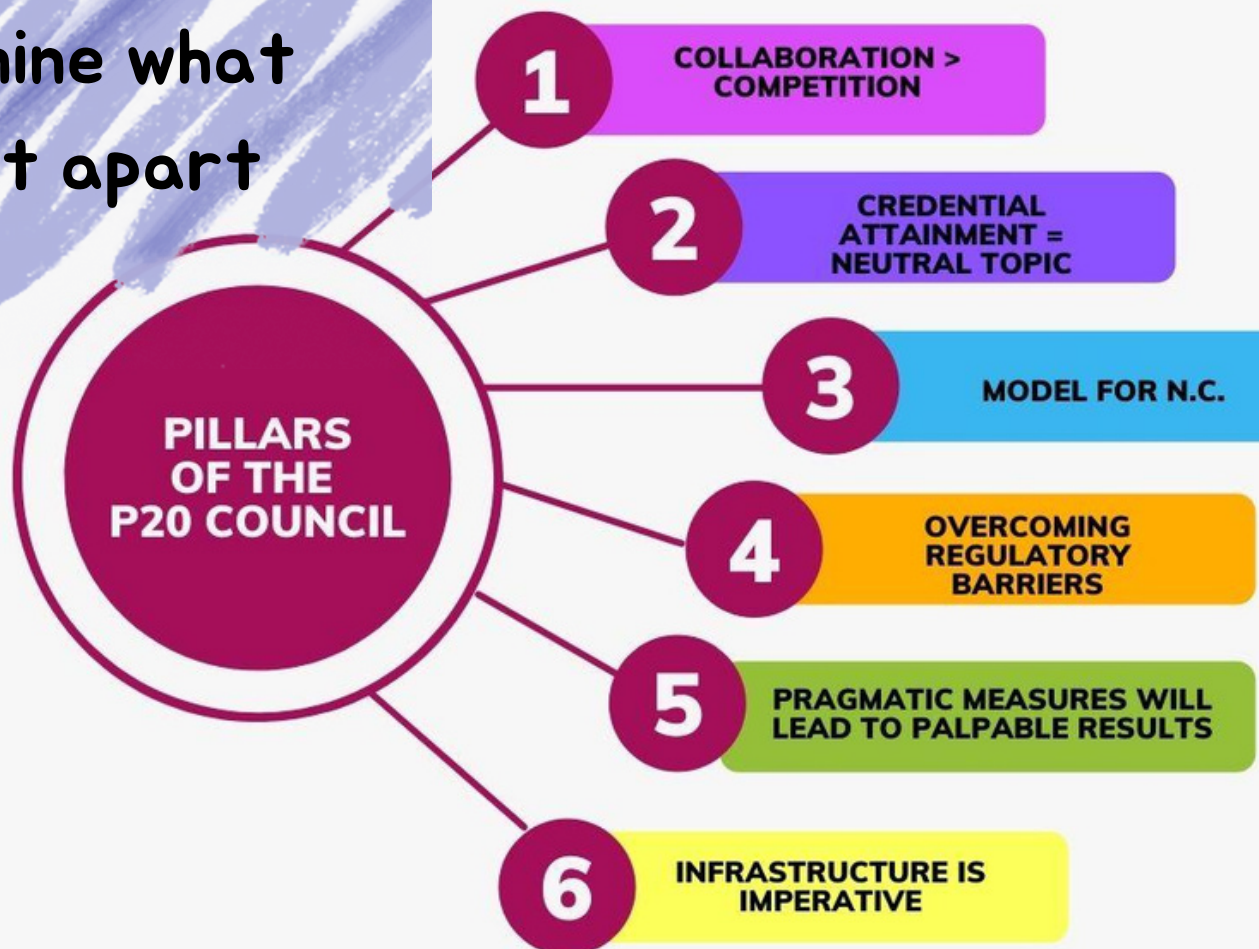


P20 Council Established

**Devote
staff or
hire**

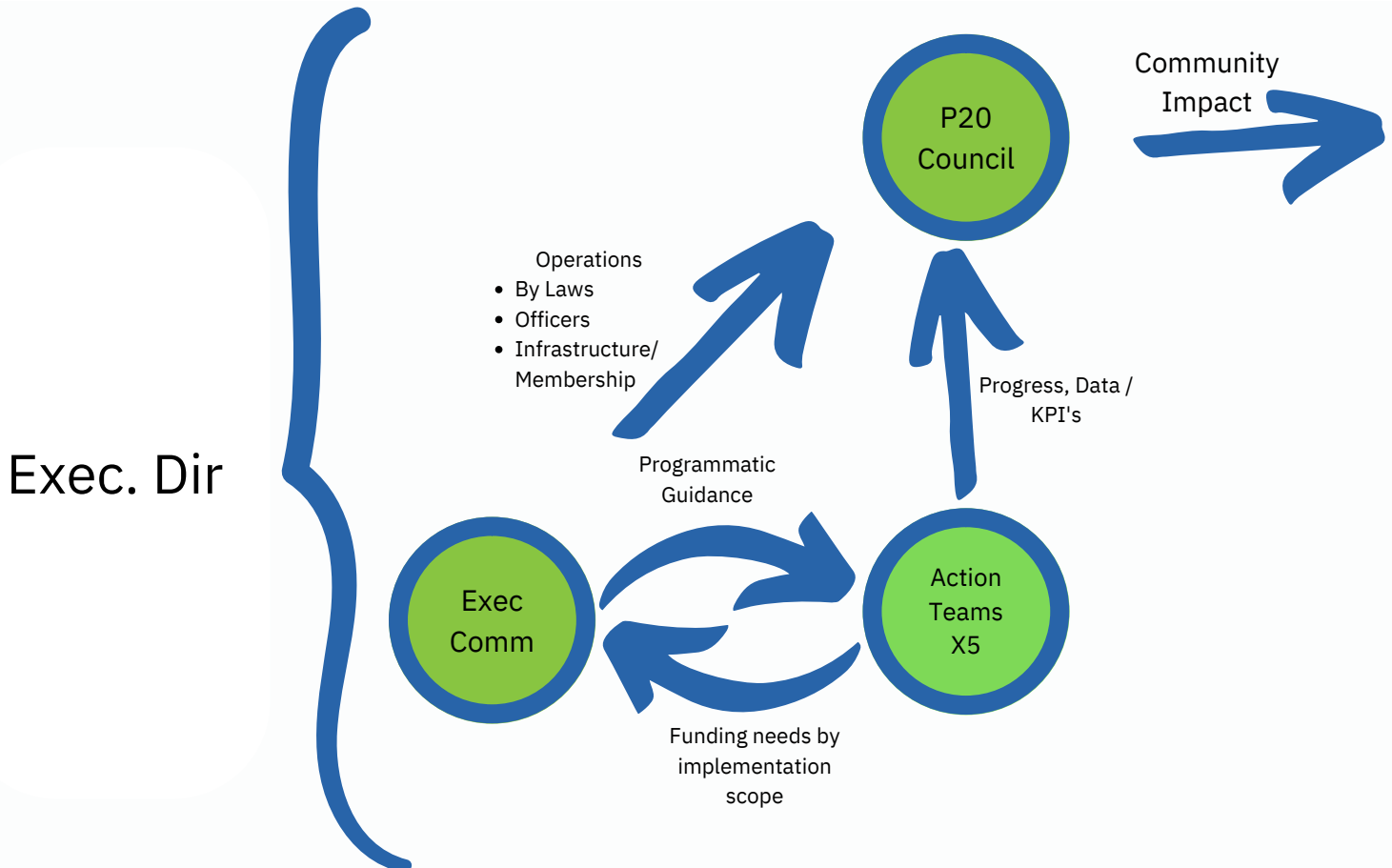
**Develop mission, vision,
objective**

**Determine what
sets it apart**



P20 Council Operations

As the “Collaborative” began to formalize the P20 structure, an Executive Director was hired. The graphic listed below is a pictorial representation of the P20 Council Executive Committee, operational responsibilities, the general P20 Council membership, Action Teams, and the desired outcome of community impact that leads to employees gaining thriving and life-sustaining employment.



P20 Council Member Responsibilities

1. Plan, organize, and aid in the implementation of initiatives that boost educational attainment leading to employment.
2. Develop and aid in the implementation of strategic plans.
3. Provide guidance for P20 implementation.
4. Assist with recruitment of new members.
5. Work closely with stakeholders of various types.

Executive Director's Role

1. Convene the Council, as well as other cross-sector leaders, to foster activities that move the strategic plan for educational and workforce attainment forward.
2. Support Council members in aligning their work with myFutureNC.
3. Aid the Council in the development of an organizational structure that will streamline the group and maximize effectiveness.
4. Spearhead a plan that includes the metrics required for success.
5. Drive a public relations campaign focused on the Council's work.
6. Research avenues/funding sources for sustainability of the Council.
7. Continuously analyze unfilled jobs and the credentials that individuals will need to qualify for those careers.



P20 Council Action Teams

LAND OF SKY P20 COUNCIL ACTION TEAMS



Strategies for Effectiveness

Employ a mix of expertise on each team

Forecast meeting schedule

Assign specific homework for members between meetings

Every agenda should have:

Key Question

Purpose: What current gap guides our work?

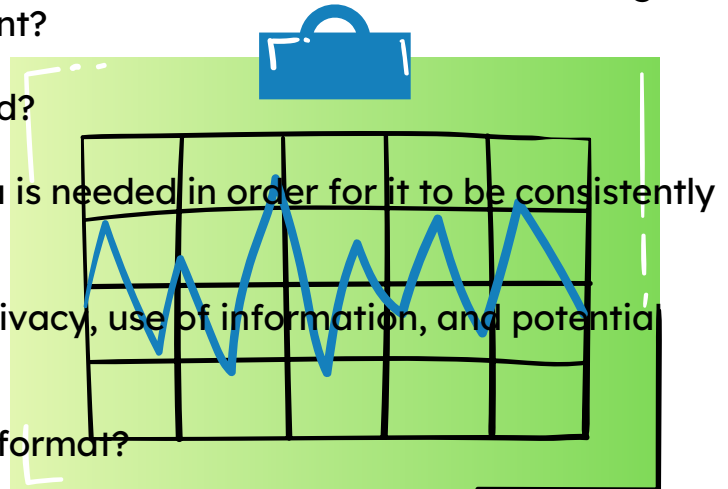
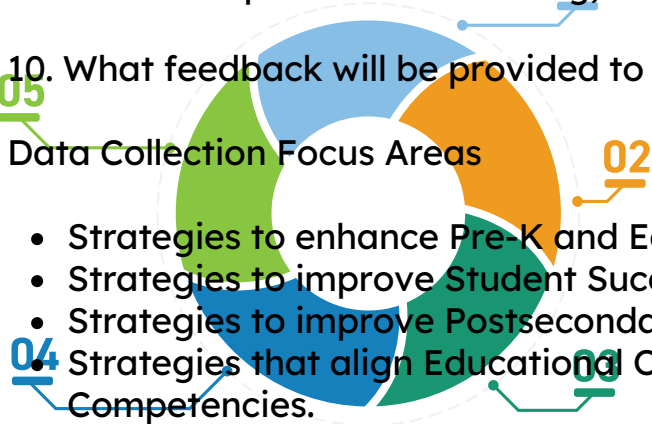
Outcomes: How will our work be felt by our community?

Data Analytics Framing Questions

How will we know if we are reaching our goals?

Key Performance Indicators need to be developed with the following questions in mind:

1. What information is needed that will provide evidence-based data that demonstrate measurable successful intervention strategies that align credential completion to gainful employment? (Keeping in mind that the overall goal is to document 10,000 additional individuals with credentials of value that lead to gainful employment.)
2. How does the information align with indicators from the organization's Strategic Plan?
3. What information is already collected by stakeholders that is relevant to measuring educational attainment and gainful employment?
4. In what format is the data currently captured?
5. What additional formatting of collected data is needed in order for it to be consistently inputted into a data management system?
6. Which items pose ethical issues regarding privacy, use of information, and potential data security risk?
7. What additional data is needed and in what format?
8. Who needs to be included in the data collection process?
9. What is the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data?
10. What feedback will be provided to assist with informed decision making?



Tips to Become Relevant

Determine a 30-Day Project

The P20 Council developed a video featuring Career & Technical Education Directors in the region with the goal of emphasizing the CTE relevancy for area employers. This can be viewed at www.losp20.org/cte

Be Intentional about Consumable Information

The P20 Council developed an overview booklet outlining its history, path forward, goals, etc. Select promotional material was also purchased. It also developed a series of videos featuring community leaders.

Find a Common Denominator to Create Buy-In

The P20 Council has been successful in convening our two community colleges to submit a joint grant to the Department of Labor. This hasn't traditionally been done collaboratively and resulted in a \$1.4 million award.

Create a Mix of Team Members & Leverage their Collective Power

The P20 Council consists of subject-matter experts in each of the strategic areas, and the Executive Director can utilize the members to tap into the expertise of their own respective organizations.

Ensure Tangible Outcomes are Felt by the Community

The P20 Council's action teams are all geared towards producing results that are beneficial for the communities served.



Video Highlighting
5 School Districts



CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)



Connecting Employers
to their Future
Workforce



\$1.4 Million Grant Awarded!

Learn more here:

<https://www.losp20.org/news/>



Funding Opportunities - Sustainability

To ensure sustainability of the P20 Council's efforts to increase educational and workforce attainment, the P20 Council Executive Committee regularly evaluates funding needs based on the Council's operating budget. The P20 Council's focused, comprehensive approach utilizes a collective impact model to create a well-functioning ecosystem, within which educational pathways are created. Pathways for Pre-K/Early Childhood Education, K-12 initiatives, and college initiatives all lead to thriving, sustainable-wage careers for students of color and low-wealth communities through the attainment of short-term credentials, associate's degrees, or bachelor's degrees. The Executive Committee continues to seek out grants and to identify funders for the following areas:

Potential Fundable Initiatives

1. Creation of a proactive educational system that focuses on providing all support services at the start of the educational journey utilizing an asset-based approach versus a deficit-based, reactive model of success (proactive vs. reactive approach to learning).
 - a). Development of strategies that reduce challenges such as childcare, transportation, and educational expenses for returning adult students.
 - b). Creation of Mentoring/Life Coaching Model of Support.
2. Development of clear educational pathways for college preparation and Career Technical Education that include increasing levels of work-based learning (WBL), college credit (either through articulation or Career and College Promise), culminating in an industry-recognized or college credential upon graduation from high school.
 - a). Continuing Education Certificates/Pathways
 - b). Stackable Credential Pathways
 - c). Micro-Credential Pathways
 - d). Third-party Credentialing Pathways
 - e). College Transfer Pathways

Funding Opportunities (Continued)

3. Utilization of community partners to recruit and enroll non-majority students, special populations such as reentry and veterans, continuing education participants, and adult learners into local community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and third-party certification programs.
 - a. In conjunction with partners such as NC Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning (REAL), the Western Women Business Center, Mountain BizWorks, and the Carolina Small Business Development Fund, development of an entrepreneurial track for justice-involved individuals who have challenges obtaining employment.
 - b. Adoption of nontraditional modes of communicating information to all communities, with an emphasis on low-wealth communities, communities of color, and rural communities.
 - c. Identification of opportunities to provide “reskilling” of displaced workers.
 - d. Establishment of policies to enhance immigrants’ and reentry populations’ access to opportunities to receive college credentials.

Potential benefits of membership include:

- Educational and Workforce Development Collaboration
- Community Inclusiveness Impact
- Access to Educational and Workforce Resources
- Professional Development Webinars
- Interaction with Attainment Affinity Groups
- Professional Networking
- Professional Coaching
- Benchmarking/Assessment of Attainment Initiatives
- Sharing of Best Practices
- Notification of Job Postings
- Identified on the Website and Social Media as a Member with Links Back to the Respective Organizations
- Annual Educational and Workforce Development Attainment Summit Events

Conclusion



Partnerships from
Pre-K to Post-Grad

The P20 Council was formed with the intentions of fostering new means for students to achieve gainful employment through higher education. In the process, the Council has spread its wings farther than ever imagined. Keeping to the initial goals, while expanding the horizons from students to the overall community, the Land of Sky P20 Council has created innovative strategies with the intentions of equitable opportunities to elevate opportunities within the four counties involved. Though there is work to be done, the Council has come a long way, and in the future will continue to explore what's possible in the realm of community betterment.



Questions? Contact Emily Nicholson, Executive Director of the P20 Council:

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