



FUTURE-READY

North Carolina

Access to a skilled workforce is North Carolina's number one resource when it comes to recruiting good paying jobs to our state. While there's a lot more to our people than just the jobs they do, a good-paying job is the foundation of making North Carolina a better place to live, work and raise a family.

We need to ensure North Carolina continues to be a leader in developing and attracting a skilled workforce – to set us up for success, Lieutenant Governor Hunt is championing strong investments in child care / early childhood education and workforce development, including:

- 1. Two major proposals to address child care shortages;*
- 2. Expanded career planning and placement programs to ease the transition from school to career;*
- 3. Championing North Carolina's strong community colleges and promote PropelNC funding to support workforce-focused initiatives at our community colleges*



Each point of this plan is focused on programs that build common ground and maximize the use of existing resources to do what is best for the hardworking people of North Carolina.

Following in the legacy of her father, Gov. Jim Hunt, North Carolina's Education Governor, Lieutenant Governor Hunt's first priority will be to champion two critical components of a **Future-Ready North Carolina: child care / early childhood education and workforce development through our strong community colleges.**

Lieutenant Governor Hunt will champion the development of a Future-Ready North Carolina by focusing on the worsening child care shortage and better aligning high school graduates with job skills through fully funding career counselors in our high schools. These will address two pressing needs to ensure North Carolina continues to be a great place to live, work and raise a family. Lieutenant Governor Hunt will also launch a statewide tour of North Carolina's 58 community colleges to learn firsthand how we can better support their work and improve our future readiness.

TACKLING THE CHILD CARE CRISIS IN NORTH CAROLINA

While we have strong public education and job training programs, maintaining our skilled workforce means addressing the needs of skilled workers to keep them here after graduation – including making sure they have access to affordable and high-quality child care. According to the North Carolina Chamber, the economic disruption due to insufficient child care availability is already having a \$5.65 billion impact in lost economic activity every year.^[1]

**\$5.65 Billion Loss:
Child Care Shortage Already Impacting North Carolina**

“Research shows that parents of young children in North Carolina are **leaving the workforce (26%), refusing job opportunities, promotions, or new jobs (37%), missing work (60%) and not pursuing job training or continuing education (32%). This costs the state **\$1.36 billion in lost tax revenue and employers \$4.48 billion.**”**
(NC DHHS, 11/14/24)

Making Child Care Affordable: Renew and Expand the NC Tri-Share Program

The NC Tri-Share program was launched in 2024 as a two-year pilot program based in three regions with \$900,000 in funding. In each region, parents making between 185% and 300% of the federal poverty level who work at a participating business can split the cost of care evenly between themselves, their employer, and the state government.^[2]

Currently, the pilot program is set to expire at the end of 2026 unless additional funding is allocated. With groups like the NC Chamber of Commerce advocating for reforms like this, there is an opportunity for true bipartisan reform that can impact the lives of thousands of families across the state. Lieutenant Governor Hunt will lead a coalition of business leaders, families and policymakers to make child care more affordable by renewing and expanding the NC Tri-Share Program to communities across the state.

Strengthening Child Care Workforce: Expanding Community College Training Centers

Since 1993, the state of North Carolina has provided funding for community colleges to establish on-site child care services. As of 2024, only 13 of the 58 community colleges provide this program and four more colleges have shuttered their programs in just the last four years.^[3] A 2022 North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation (NCECF) study found that 45% of parents of young children in NC had either dropped out or declined educational or job training opportunities because of a lack of child care.^[4]

The 2023 state budget allocated \$3 million to this program but half of that funding is not set to renew for the next budget.^[5] Ensuring sustained funding and incentives to expand this program to all 58 community colleges would help fill critical gaps in staffing for child care providers and provide free child care for parents at the college.

Addressing the child care crisis across NC is an incredibly complicated task but expanding these programs would leverage our excellent community colleges, strengthen experiential programs for child care professionals and increase options for students and working families.

Lieutenant Governor Hunt will champion an expansion of Child care Training Centers in our Community Colleges. With campuses in over 58 counties, community colleges offer sites within a half-hour drive of most North Carolina citizens in every corner of the state.

EXPANDING CAREER PATHWAYS TO STRENGTHEN NORTH CAROLINA'S WORKFORCE

North Carolina's strong public schools have career readiness programs that start as early as fifth grade continuing through high school graduation that help students develop durable skills and align their studies with individual talents and interests. These programs give them hands-on experience with potential careers the closer they get to graduation. This type of transition is critical to prepare our workforce with the rapid pace of innovation across all fields and industries. A 2020 survey by MyFutureNC showed non-supportive transitions, particularly at this point in a student's educational career, was a major barrier to post-secondary attainment. (NC DPI, Career Development and Work Based Learning)

While addressing the looming child care shortage to retain our skilled workers is our most pressing concern, we also have to ensure our graduates are ready for the jobs or next steps that best fit their talents and interests. Lieutenant Governor Hunt will champion the expansion of career planning and placement programs to communities across the state.



CHAMPION NORTH CAROLINA'S STRONG COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Our community colleges provide North Carolinians with the most value in preparing for a career and our state the most value in recruiting good-paying jobs. Lieutenant Governor Hunt will launch a tour to visit all 58 community colleges across the state and hear directly how the state can better support their work and highlight their strong programs. During each visit, the Lieutenant Governor will highlight unique programs focused on workforce development and meet with local employers and community leaders to enhance partnership and collaboration.

The Lieutenant Governor will also champion Propel NC, the proposed new funding model for North Carolina's community colleges that incentivizes funding programs to meet workforce demand. As a member of both the State Board of Education and Community College Board, she will also emphasize Career and College-Ready Graduate Programs. ^[6]

[1] NC Chamber of Commerce - [How Childcare Impacts North Carolina's Workforce Productivity and the State's Economy](#).

[2] EdNC - [Employees in these 14 counties could be eligible to split cost of child care with employers and state in pilot](#)

[3] EdNC - [Where community colleges and early childhood education collide](#)

[4] NCECF - [Child Care & Economic Recovery Across North Carolina During COVID-19](#)

[5] EdNC - [Community college funds are needed to help students with child care costs, local administrators say](#).

[6] EdNC- [Community Colleges Prepare to Implement Propel NC](#)