NORTH CAROLINA HAS AN URGENT AND GROWING NEED FOR TALENT.

Our need for talent has never been more urgent. While experiencing explosive growth in diversity, size, and economic activity, North Carolina is experiencing a skills-gap that puts our state at risk:

- **67%** of jobs require a postsecondary degree of high-quality credential, but only 49-percent of North Carolinians between the ages of 25 and 44 have completed that level of education.

- **50%** of North Carolina employers indicate they are not able to hire the workers they need, citing a lack of employability skills (65%), technical skills (49%), and overall education (43%).

- **24%** of North Carolinians agree that all students receive the same quality of education regardless of their background.

For every 100 9th graders there are 86 high school graduates, of whom 72 express postsecondary intentions, 67 enroll in postsecondary institutions, 51 return for a second year, and **34 end up earning a degree within six years.**
In response to the State’s workforce requirements and the need for all North Carolinians to earn family-supporting wages, in February 2019 the myFutureNC Commission established one of the highest educational attainment targets in the nation.

**myFutureNC is championing an ambitious goal to have 2 million North Carolinians between the ages of 25-44 to hold a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by the year 2030.**

Over the past 30 years, our state has experienced unprecedented surges in skilled service jobs such as finance or healthcare that require a credential or postsecondary degree. This trend is projected to continue, yet North Carolina’s talent supply is not keeping pace. The most recent pre-COVID-19 estimates available project the state will fall short by 300,000 individuals with the skills necessary to meet the workforce demands by the year 2030, and the ongoing coronavirus pandemic only heightens the importance of meeting this goal. The reckoning of the pandemic has cemented the importance of alleviating challenge on economic mobility for underrepresented groups in our population.

**Updated projections indicate that North Carolina’s new projected path puts the state 300,000 short of the 2 million by 2030 target**

Rapid growth and diversity of the North Carolina economy have moved our state forward quickly; yet our education system and students need help.
North Carolina's education infrastructure - K-12 schools, community colleges, 4-year colleges and universities, and our workforce boards all operate under separate umbrellas, without a shared vision for attainment. myFutureNC is the only statewide organization focused across the entire education and workforce continuum - from preschool through to a credential or postsecondary degree that aligns with workforce needs. Many strategic partner organizations are working to advance the state within specific channels. Through alignment of these efforts, led by myFutureNC, the outcomes can be so much stronger. myFutureNC’s work to advance North Carolina’s attainment in postsecondary education through a system-wide approach will be required to build resiliency coming out of the crisis and beyond.

Raising postsecondary attainment statewide requires a better understanding of the entire education continuum, from early childhood through postsecondary, to help us identify where our current education efforts are working well, as well as where we need to expand, focus and invest in new and innovative approaches.

By bringing together leaders across education, business, government and philanthropy, we are mobilizing state and local collaboratives to actively eliminate systemic barriers to achievement and attainment, prepare students for work, provide options for ongoing skills expansion and help North Carolinians maintain a fulfilling, sustained quality of life.
WE MUST DESIGN A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM THAT REDUCES THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY GAPS TIED TO RACE AND INCOME

To ensure the state remains economically competitive now and into the future, increasing the levels of education after high school for all individuals, but especially first-generation, low-income, and people who are Black, Hispanic and Native American, is essential. The rapidly changing demographic makeup of North Carolina will further elevate this need by the year 2030. The gap in workforce talent presents a significant opportunity to improve postsecondary readiness, access, and completions in North Carolina. This gap also increases the urgency for the State to drive alignment between our education systems and the needs of our businesses and industries.

North Carolina is also experiencing growing levels of income and wealth inequality and the pandemic has exacerbated this by contributing to the longstanding racial and ethnic gaps in education outcomes and other areas. These persistent disparities not only prevent the state from reaching its economic potential but also run counter to the rights and core beliefs that undergird our identity and our civic fabric. North Carolina has reached a crossroads beyond which the state will need more than replication, expansion or tweaking of current approaches in order to fully align our education systems, address social disparities, and improve our state’s economic competitiveness.
WE BELIEVE A BETTER-EDUCATED NORTH CAROLINA IS THE KEY TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND UPWARD MOBILITY FOR ALL CITIZENS.
A BOLD STRATEGY FOR AN AMBITIOUS GOAL

Our state has come so far and accomplished so much in education, especially over the past 30 years, but the time has come for bold new plans and even bolder actions that will take our state even further. Perhaps the most critical action needed is a collective willingness to abandon our traditional sector-by-sector approach to addressing isolated issues in favor of a cross-sector, coordinated approach that tackles systemic challenges and barriers across the education continuum and beyond.

A SHARED VISION FOR ATTAINMENT IN NC

All stakeholders share a vision for collective ownership of and accountability for education across North Carolina -- from early childhood through adulthood. As the only entity in North Carolina singularly focused on meeting the state’s “2 Million by 2030” postsecondary attainment goal, it is incumbent upon myFutureNC to cultivate and sustain a culture that embraces the importance of postsecondary attainment, the state’s attainment goal and what it will take to achieve it.

POSTSECONDARY READINESS, ACCESS & COMPLETION

There is alignment across local, regional and state actions that will dramatically increase attainment of valuable credentials and postsecondary degrees. To create a student-centered and attainment-driven climate, myFutureNC must identify and help tear down the barriers that prevent leaders from better integrating work across sectors. This is true across early childhood, K-12 and higher education, public and private institutions, as well as at the state and local levels.

EDUCATION & LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

North Carolina’s educational attainment efforts align directly with North Carolina’s talent needs and industry trends. A demand-driven approach can only be achieved through the systematic engagement of business and industry leaders, who have been the linchpin since the onset of this work. myFutureNC must be structured to facilitate conversations about what North Carolina employers need, what gaps currently exist, and how to bridge those gaps through a more responsive education system.
The urgency of our work has only been elevated by the recent pandemic and subsequent economic downturn, but we remain confident that our long-term strategies will be effective towards reaching our goal. We see educational attainment as both a short-term recovery strategy and a long-term measure to ensure our citizens have the required skills and education to navigate a fluctuating economy moving forward.

**INVEST IN A VIBRANT FUTURE**

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**CONVENE, ENGAGE & DRIVE AWARENESS**

myFutureNC is responsible for maintaining a consistent drumbeat for the state’s urgent need to increase attainment. The organization will spend significant time and capacity deployed to keep the public and partners engaged.

**ALIGN & COORDINATE STATE-LEVEL EFFORTS**

myFutureNC must create the space for education and workforce sector leaders to collaborate on high-impact strategies, especially those that affect students at key transition points in the education continuum, focusing on aligning efforts with the demands of NC employers.

**CATALYZE & SUPPORT LOCAL INITIATIVES**

myFutureNC will be responsible for catalyzing new action focusing attention on local counties and regions by providing necessary data for local stakeholders to determine where to prioritize their resources.

**ADVANCE PRACTICES & POLICIES**

myFutureNC will identify and engage in partnerships that demonstrably contribute to the field’s understanding and pursuit of evidence-based practices for successfully implementing equitable attainment initiatives.

**MEASURE PROGRESS**

myFutureNC will be responsible for measuring and monitoring interim benchmarks in order to understand gaps and opportunities and to keep North Carolina and its stakeholders accountable for reaching the goal.
WE MUST EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR A STRONGER NORTH CAROLINA.

Thanks to early and significant venture philanthropy from the John M. Belk Endowment, Goodnight Educational Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, C.D. Spangler Foundation, Duke Energy Foundation, the Belk Foundation, and Greg Alcorn through the Foundation of the Carolinas, myFutureNC has embarked on an ambitious path forward for North Carolina. The organization’s future strength will come from broad-based investment from private foundations, the corporate community, leaders on the state and local level, and legislative support of local initiatives that will ensure successful implementation of myFutureNC’s vision.

An investment in myFutureNC is an investment in North Carolina’s future. It is an investment in its people, its communities and its economy. Support toward meeting this goal is critical and life-changing. 2 Million by 2030 will benefit ALL North Carolinians. An investment in myFutureNC is an investment in a stronger North Carolina.
myFutureNC is a statewide 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on educational attainment and is the result of cross-sector collaboration among North Carolina leaders in education, business, and government.

www.myfuturenc.org