

MEMO

From: Jeni Corn, myFutureNC

Re: Call for myFutureNC Research/Policy Briefs Request

May 5, 2021

Background

With support from the John M. Belk Endowment, Goodnight Educational Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, between November 2017 and December 2018, the UNC System Office brought together North Carolina's thought leaders in education, business, faith-based and nonprofit communities, and representatives from the North Carolina General Assembly and the Governor's Office. Together, these leaders became the [myFutureNC Commission](#) and launched a statewide conversation about economic competitiveness, workforce development and educational attainment. The commission conducted research and collected input from experts across the state to develop a vision—from preschool through postsecondary education and the workforce—for a stronger and more competitive North Carolina. The full commission convened five times in different locations across the state. Over the same period, in-state and national subject-matter experts in P-12 education, postsecondary education and workforce, along with many other myFutureNC partners, produced multiple policy briefs and fact sheets, conducted nine listening sessions across the state, commissioned a statewide Gallup survey and created a webinar series, all with the goal of building a comprehensive plan, benchmarked against best practices nationwide, that promotes lifelong learning for all North Carolinians ([all myFutureNC Commission resources are available here](#)).

This multi-year collective initiative resulted in myFutureNC's Call-to-Action report, released February 20, 2019, and the official launch of North Carolina's postsecondary attainment goal - **2 million North Carolinians between the ages of 25-44 to hold a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by the year 2030**. In June 2019, with bipartisan support and a signature from the Governor, the North Carolina General Assembly codified the goal into law through [HB664/S.L.2015-55](#). With momentum building around myFutureNC and the statewide attainment goal, the organization transitioned from a commission to a nonprofit organization during the summer of 2019. As a nonprofit organization, myFutureNC builds on the work of the myFutureNC Commission and the Call-to-Action Report to move the goal into action, working across the business, education and workforce sectors to realize the bold attainment goal.

In service of the 2 million by 2030 goal, myFutureNC has partnered with Carolina Demography to set the baseline for progress and implement the recommendation of the myFutureNC Commission to develop and track a dynamic set of evaluation criteria for the state and county-level. The result is an 18-indicator [State Attainment Dashboard](#) and an accompanying set of [100 County Attainment Profiles](#) with data unique to each county to empower and support educational attainment efforts at the local level.

Research/Policy Brief Request

myFutureNC is committed to ensuring efforts to increase postsecondary attainment in North Carolina are rigorous and evidence-based. While numerous stakeholders are involved in data improvement efforts across the state, few have focused on the development and evaluation of strategies to increase postsecondary attainment and education-to-labor market alignment. Recognizing this gap, myFutureNC wants to identify and facilitate adoption of evidence-based

policies and practices that drive improvements in educational attainment for all, with a focus on steps to understand and close gaps in opportunity/access, quality, and/or outcomes across student subgroups. We want to highlight research that demonstrates evidenced-based practices, that if implemented with fidelity, will ultimately lead to increases in postsecondary attainment and economic prosperity for North Carolinians.

myFutureNC is interested in partnering with North Carolina university and college faculty and graduate students, non-profits, or government agencies to develop attainment-focused policy and research briefs that communicate practical implications of research to North Carolina local and state leaders and practitioners, policymakers, and lawmakers. These briefs could be part of an undergraduate or graduate-level course; part of an individual or group project; drawn from theses or dissertations; a strategy for disseminating findings from faculty-led research or evaluation projects; or sharing recommendations from policy-focused work from sector staff or commissions/task force reports. These briefs should be relevant to NC-specific contexts, initiatives, priorities, policies, governance structures, etc.

Research/Policy Brief Definitions

A *policy brief* presents a concise summary of information that can help policy and lawmakers understand, and likely make decisions about, government policies at the state or local level. Policy briefs may give objective summaries of relevant research or suggest possible policy options or go even further and argue for courses of action.

A *research brief* presents a concise summary of information that can help readers understand, and likely make decisions about, state and local interventions or strategies. Research briefs may give objective summaries of relevant research, suggest possible intervention strategies based on findings in similar contexts.

Research/Policy Brief Topics of Interest

myFutureNC has identified the following attainment-focused topics* of interest

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| 1. Adult Learners | 14. First-Year Persistence |
| 2. Broadband Access, Affordability, and Adoption | 15. High School Graduation |
| 3. Chronic Absenteeism | 16. Historically Black Colleges and Universities/Minority Serving Institutions |
| 4. College & Career-Ready in Math | 17. Low-Performing K12 Schools |
| 5. College & Career-Ready in Reading | 18. NC Pre-K Enrollment/Early Learning Experiences |
| 6. College Advisors, Mentors, Coaches | 19. Non-degree Workforce Credentials |
| 7. Disconnected Youth | 20. Online and Blended Learning |
| 8. Earning College Credit in High School | 21. Postsecondary Completion |
| 9. Education and Labor Market Alignment | 22. Postsecondary Remediation |
| 10. Equity | 23. School Counselors |
| 11. FAFSA Completion | 24. Transition to Postsecondary |
| 12. Financial Aid Reform | 25. Transition to the Workforce |
| 13. First Generation College-Going Students | 26. Work-based Learning/Apprenticeships |

Components of the Research/Policy Briefs

These *myFutureNC Attainment Briefs*, should be 3-5 pages (12-pt font, times new roman, single-spaced) in length that

- **Overview**: Provide landscape information, including relevant data (i.e., table, graphic, visualization) on the issue
- **Connections to Attainment**: Describe how the topic area/issue relates to attainment, and what barriers might exist
- **Relevance to North Carolina**: Consider NC-specific contexts such as large and small school districts; rural and urban settings; 2- and 4-year public and independent postsecondary institutions and systems; current local and state governance structures; existing local and statewide initiatives
- **Recommendations**: Include top-level, research-based recommendations or promising practices for state or local-level practitioners or policymakers
- **References**: Include APA-style citations and references to peer-reviewed journals, dashboards, white papers, evaluation reports, or dissertations.

Examples of Research Briefs

- [Reaching a Postsecondary Attainment Goal: A Multi-State Overview](#) (2018)
- [Taking Alignment to the Next Level: How K-12 and Higher Education Can Collaborate to Support Student Success](#) (2019)
- [POLICY SNAPSHOT: Attainment Goals and Plans](#) (2017)
- [The Educational Attainment of Chicago Public Schools Students 2015: A Focus on Four-Year College Degrees](#) (2015)

Timeline

myFutureNC will collect these several times over the course of the academic year: mid-December; mid-May; mid-August.

Process for Publication

After review by our staff, these research and policy briefs will be published on our website as part of the *myFutureNC Attainment Roadmap* to help guide state and local decisions that address the most common or pressing attainment challenges.

myFutureNC Point of Contact

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