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# Belk Endowment awards \$9.6M in grants for N.C. education initiatives

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The John M. Belk Endowment has awarded \$9.6 million to 10 community colleges and organizations across North Carolina to help more students complete degrees that lead to sustainable wages, while strengthening the state's work force.

A three-year grant of \$7.75 million will bring a college completion program called Single Stop to the state. Single Stop connects students with community and government resources. Those funds will pay for startup and software-development costs for services at more than a dozen sites including community colleges, veterans' centers and historically black colleges in North Carolina.

It provides training, technology and case management for students, including benefits screening and access, legal counseling, tax preparation and financial coaching to address issues such as debt management, budgeting and credit clean-up.

The additional grants will fund community college and state initiatives in leadership development, creating career pathways and outreach to attract students — and adults who have started, but not finished their degrees — complete their schooling.

"In a state with the America's third-largest community college system, the Endowment will continue to invest in their efforts to get more students through credentialing programs equipped with skills they need to excel in the jobs of tomorrow," Executive Director [Kristy Teskey](#) said [in a statement](#).

Other programs receiving money include:

- \$175,000 to Davidson County Community College to work with a national marketing agency to create new branding and marketing approaches to reach and attract students to high-demand careers.
- \$125,000 to Degrees Matter! in the Greensboro/High Point area to hire a volunteer coordinator to train coaches to connect adults with some college background to degree

completion programs.

- \$50,000 to Achieving the Dream to sponsor 10 N.C. community college presidents' participation in a national leadership symposium to study new ways to help students finish college with a credential that leads to a good job.
- \$550,000 to The Aspen Institute to help selected N.C. community colleges enhance completion outcomes by using the data gathering, site visit and feedback techniques tied to the organization's evaluation process for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.
- \$150,000 to Brunswick Community College for its "Project Finish Line," which aims to reengage students who have completed some college to return to complete their work-force credential or degree.
- \$525,000 to N.C. State University to partner with The Aspen Institute to infuse its community college leadership programs with new curricula and resources for the next generation of community college leaders.
- \$200,000 to NC Works. That partnership between the N.C. Department of Commerce, N.C. community colleges and N.C. Department of Public Instruction will develop a "pathways" program to attract people to education and training programs for high-demand jobs within the state's new regional prosperity zones.

The Belk Endowment is a private family foundation that partners with post-secondary programs and institutions in North Carolina. It aims to increase access and completion of post-secondary education so underrepresented students can get good jobs and keep the state competitive.

Jennifer Thomas covers retail, health care and education for the Charlotte Business Journal.