



NC DEPARTMENT
of COMMERCE
LABOR & ECONOMIC
ANALYSIS



A Report on the
Operations of the
North Carolina
**COMMON FOLLOW-UP
SYSTEM**



**May
2024**



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A REPORT ON THE OPERATIONS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COMMON FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM

May 2024

The 2024 Common Follow-up System (CFS) Operational Report provides information on CFS activities over the past calendar year. This report includes information related to education, employment and training programs for which data were reported by state agencies under the requirements of the North Carolina General Statute Chapter 96 Article 4¹.

WHAT IS THE COMMON FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM?

The Common Follow-up System provides information on the educational and employment outcomes of participants in publicly supported educational, employment, and training programs. CFS grew out of the recognition by a group of state agencies that quality outcome information was needed on the participants for program planning, evaluation, and resource management.

Although prior to the CFS each of the agencies conducted independent follow-up studies to fulfill specific programmatic, regulatory, or other requirements, information content and collection procedures were specific to each agency. Existing collection methods were often expensive and without a mechanism to share information among agencies, review outcomes across programs and agencies, study the relationships among programs and agencies, or examine results for the system as a whole. In short, there was no consistent encompassing method to examine North Carolina's education, employment, and training community. CFS was developed as a cost-effective response to these limitations.

HISTORY OF THE COMMON FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM

The CFS was developed in 1992 as a cooperative venture of the participating agencies under the auspices of the North Carolina State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NCSOICC). The participating agencies chose the former Employment Security Commission (ESC) as the system operator, due to its expertise with large data sets and its responsibility for the unemployment insurance wage file. In the initial year, a prototype matching system was developed. This matching system provided a mechanism whereby data submitted by an individual participating agency were matched to data submitted by each of the other agencies and to employment and wage information in the Unemployment Insurance wage file.

Over the first few years of operation, the CFS evolved in data processing procedures and system expansion and was converted from a single year matching system to a longitudinal database. The longitudinal database structure provided a mechanism for following an individual's progress across education, employment and training programs across time as well as supporting comparisons at specific intervals or points in time. This conversion also provided the opportunity to study the long-term impact of programs, to examine the interrelationships among agencies in the overall provision of services, and to gain a better

¹ https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/HTML/ByArticle/Chapter_96/Article_4.html

understanding of the path individuals follow while utilizing these services. The number of individuals processed per year increased from 330,045 in 1992 to over 1.7 million in 1995, while the number of agencies grew from six to eight over the same period.

In 1995, the General Assembly enacted legislation that amended Chapter 96 of the North Carolina General Statutes and established CFS by statute. The legislation defined system participation, established, and assigned operational and evaluative responsibilities, mandated data integrity and confidentiality, and outlined reporting requirements and schedules.

Over the next several years, there was increased interest in the data contained in the CFS. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 stimulated further interest and attention to the CFS data. WIA mandated the collection, calculation and reporting of performance and accountability measures for workforce training programs operated throughout the state. The ESC worked in collaboration with the Division of Workforce Development (DWD) on the development of procedures for the processing, calculation, and reporting of the state's WIA performance measures. To help meet the reporting requirements for WIA, additional data elements were added to the CFS in the calculation of performance measures.

During the 2001 Legislative Session, the General Assembly transferred the evaluative responsibility for the CFS from the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) to the ESC. In July of 2011, the General Assembly enacted legislation that transferred the ESC to the North Carolina Department of Commerce (NC Commerce). Responsibility for the CFS was moved to the NC Commerce's Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD).

In 2012, the General Assembly enacted Session Law 2012-131 to reform the state's workforce development system. Part of the law called for NC Commerce to improve and strengthen the CFS and to collaborate with the Commission on Workforce Development to utilize information from CFS to create performance measures for the state's workforce development system. To improve and strengthen the CFS, NC Commerce began several initiatives to enhance technology for the system and update documentation for agency and programmatic information. CFS was migrated from its mainframe computing environment to a server-based platform to improve system capacity.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education in 2012 to build a State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). The goal of the system was to provide a mechanism to follow individuals across North Carolina's K-12 education system, higher education, and into the workforce. The SLDS project was able to establish a link between the system and the employment-related data in CFS, which was completed through a joint effort between NC Commerce and the NC Department of Information Technology's Government Data Analytics Center (GDAC).

As part of its ongoing efforts to improve CFS, NC Commerce applied for and received a competitive grant in 2013 with the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA) through the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) program. The grant was used to enhance the CFS technology capabilities and to fund the development of the North Carolina Tool for Online Workforce and Education Reporting (NC TOWER)². NC TOWER is a public online reporting system that provides

² <https://tower.nc.gov>

employment and wage outcomes by program, degree, and institution for North Carolina's public higher education systems.

To enhance the CFS system outputs, LEAD staff worked with the Division of Workforce Solutions and the NCWorks Commission to develop a set of performance measures for the state's Workforce Development System. These measures were used in the Commission's first report "Measuring the Performance of North Carolina's Workforce Development System: A First Look" in 2014, and the subsequent annual reports. The most recent report was prepared in December 2023 and released in January 2024.

During the 2014 Session, the General Assembly enacted Session Law 2014-100 which required NC Commerce to develop a plan for the transfer of the of the CFS information and technology to GDAC. NC Commerce worked closely with GDAC to develop the business and system requirements for the new system. In 2015, LEAD and GDAC migrated the historical CFS data from its mainframe computing environment into the GDAC server-based environment. This included the migration of over 100 gigabytes of data as well as an inventory and classification of all historical data files and elements.

Beginning with the 2015 program year and continuing today, contributor data submissions and processing have been completed in the GDAC environment. During the following years, LEAD staff continued to work with GDAC and the contributing agencies to enhance the CFS content and infrastructure as well as make improvements to the contributor data portal.

HOW IS THE COMMON FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM OPERATED?

The participating agencies supply data files based on their operational and reporting periods, which can be a calendar quarter, federal fiscal year, state fiscal year, academic term, or school year. The enhanced CFS is designed to receive and align information across varying reporting schedules. The number of submitted data files and corresponding file structures are customized for each agency and are aligned to contributing agency's existing information systems. The submitted files are created from administrative records that are maintained by each of the contributors and contain a wealth of information specific to each contributor, including demographic data, program enrollment information, program completion, course participation, services received, and other agency-specific information.

HOW ARE CFS DATA PROCESSED?

Each contributing agency has defined reporting timelines customized to their specific program and agency operations. These reporting timelines are developed in collaboration with the contributing agencies and are catalogued in the GDAC contributor portal. The enhanced CFS provides an automated email notification to each contributor with a reminder of their reporting deadlines. In addition, LEAD works closely with the contributing agencies to track reporting timelines and to identify any reporting delays. The contributing agencies transmit their data files to the secure GDAC environment. Once received, information is subject to an automated data validation process. The validation process generates Edit Reports for each submitted data file and the reports are available to the contributing agencies through the GDAC Contributor Portal. Contributors review the edit reports and consult with staff at LEAD to determine if updates or corrections are needed. Agencies are responsible for reviewing and approving

their final data submissions. Once approved the data are loaded to individual contributor warehouses in the GDAC environment.

In addition to the information supplied by the education, employment and training agencies, NC Commerce's Division of Employment Security (DES) provides employment and wage information as well as information on Unemployment Insurance claims and benefit recipients. These data are processed monthly and quarterly and loaded to specific tables within the GDAC environment. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, DES started to provide more timely weekly UI claims data to the CFS.

Following the completion of the data loading process, LEAD analyzes data from contributing agencies in conjunction with employment and wage data. The resulting information are utilized in the development and production of reports, data files and other related research products.

The confidential nature of information contained in the CFS mandates the use of strict safeguards in the collection, storage, and use of the data. CFS data are stored within the secure GDAC environment. Access to the systems requires individual user data access profiles, as well as individual user ID's and passwords. At the time of system enrollment and with every data release, contributors and staff are informed of the confidential nature of the data and the legal restrictions on its use. All informational products are subject to a set of data suppression procedures to prevent the disclosure of personally identifiable information.

IS THE CFS COST-EFFECTIVE?

The CFS is an efficient and cost-effective method for collecting longitudinal outcomes for education, employment, and training program participants. The extensive use of administrative records and automated matching systems allows the costs to be held below that of any system that would rely upon phone or mail surveys to collect similar data.

The cost-effectiveness of the CFS can also be evaluated in terms of the benefit that the data provide to the participating entities. The system generates matching employment and wage data for participants without the use of telephone or mail surveys. Benefits include time saved not having to produce mail and analyze responses from program participants, making the return on investment invaluable.

Several of the contributing agencies have utilized the information available through CFS to help meet a variety of state and federal performance, policy, and evaluation initiatives. The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) has utilized the information to help in meeting federal performance requirements for the U.S. Department of Education including the National Reporting System for Adult Education programs and the Perkins IV core indicators. In addition, they utilized data from CFS in the development of a performance measures system for North Carolina's 58 Community Colleges including an employment measure that will be utilized to assess post-completion employment outcomes.

The University of North Carolina System (UNC) has utilized information through CFS to support internal analyses, assist in strategic planning and provide employment-related information to the UNC Board of

Governors in its program review process. The UNC dashboard³ contains a variety of enrollment and graduation statistics including a link to the employment and wage outcomes in the NC TOWER web portal.

In addition, information from the CFS is utilized by agency partners in meeting state and federal performance and evaluation initiatives. These efforts have included the use of CFS data in assessing the provision of services to participants as well as the evaluation of employment and wage outcomes. CFS data is often utilized to support economic development activities in the state and assist stakeholders to make informed decisions for business recruitment and expansion. Career development programs across the state in both higher education and high schools also use the data.

WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF CFS DATA?

The scope of the CFS is extensive in terms of the number of contributing entities, the number of individuals included in the system and the breadth of program and service coverage. Review of follow-up systems in other states reveals that North Carolina's CFS offers the most comprehensive coverage of education and workforce program participant outcomes of any state longitudinal data system. Many states and governmental entities with similar missions and mandates view the CFS as a model for delivering follow-up information. The CFS is an efficient and cost-effective tool for long-term follow-up due to the reliance on automated matching of administrative records. However, since much of the data utilized in the CFS were originally gathered for different purposes, the resultant output possesses both inherent strengths and limitations. Several of the most significant areas are described below:

Wage information includes information on individuals:

- working in jobs covered under North Carolina Unemployment Insurance Laws

Available employment-related data includes:

- employment status of the individual
- size of the employing firm
- North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code of the firm.

Wage information reflects total quarterly earnings; hourly or weekly wages are not available.

Wage information is not available for individuals who:

- work outside of North Carolina
- are employed in North Carolina, but not covered by unemployment insurance (e.g., the self-employed, church and religious organization employees, summer camp employees, and other non-covered workers)

Employment-related information that cannot be determined includes:

- entry-on-duty date of employment for the individual
- employment type (i.e., permanent, temporary, part- or full-time)
- whether the person worked at all during the quarter
- number of hours worked for the quarter
- person's occupation.

³ <https://www.northcarolina.edu/impact/stats-data-reports/>

CFS CURRENT OPERATION (2023)

Improving the Quality of Workforce and Education Data

During the 2023 calendar year, LEAD focused on reviewing and updating data elements in the warehouse, along with enhancing data quality. Working together with data contributors, LEAD staff made significant changes to the selection of data fields and validation rules for data submitted by the UNC System, the Division of Aging and Adult Services, the Division of Workforce Solutions, the North Carolina Community College System.

In a continued effort to improve data quality, enhance analyses, and increase analytical accuracy, LEAD staff extensively utilized eLink⁴ project for data resolution and validation. The eLink outputs were used to improve NC TOWER reporting, prepare Operational reports, and carry out various data requests and evaluation studies. For example, the algorithms in eLink allowed to resolve more than 250 thousand (10% of the overall population) Social Security Numbers for the NC DPI high school student data stored in the CFS for the 1991-2023 period. For some agencies that do not collect Social Security Numbers, such as Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), the solution provided by eLink remains the only way to resolve SSN's and link individuals' records across datasets. In particular, for the DAAS, the resolution rate reaches 91%.

Responding to data requests

The system's well-functioning infrastructure and diverse range of data sources enable CFS to address a multitude of internal and external data requests. During the report year, LEAD staff provided data and analytic support to the economic, workforce, and education partners, including the UNC System Office; NC Community College System; Wake County Public School System; myFutureNC; NCWORKS Commission; NC Office of Science, Technology & Innovation; US Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education; NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission; and various Workforce Development Boards and Career Centers.

LEAD staff completed wage data matching request from the NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission to support their evaluation of community corrections programs and in-prison treatment programs and completion of a biennial report to the General Assembly (G.S. 164-47).

CFS data is used to support the NCCCS Performance Measures Report (Perkins Report) and Wake County Public School System initiative to track the employment trajectory of their students.

In 2023, LEAD has started work on the wage matching request from the University of North Carolina System Office to support their research of the employment, wage outcomes, and return on investment of their programs, and assessment the economic impact of programs and institutions. This request was successfully fulfilled in March 2024.

⁴ Formerly known as Enterprise Entity Resolution (EER) project

Utilizing CFS to Carry Out Analysis of Workforce and Education Programs

As part of the CFS legislative mandate, LEAD increased focus on program evaluation and data narratives to help education and workforce agencies, state leadership, and the general public make data-informed decisions in North Carolina's workforce system.

In 2023, LEAD has strengthened its research partnership with the NC Division of Workforce Solutions and NCWorks Commission through joint participation in the US Department of Labor's Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC). This collaboration has led to several studies evaluating WIOA Title I and III programs and enhancing understanding of using administrative data for evaluation methods and causal evidence. It has also deepened insights into workforce development needs and fostered the trust essential for successful research collaboration.

LEAD staff also provided data and analytical support to the NCWORKS Commission's 2024 Workforce Development System Performance Report.

Using information from the CFS, LEAD analysts carried out a study for the NC Division Vocational Rehabilitation partners examining the impact of Pre-Employment Transition Services ("PETS") on the employment and educational outcomes of youth with disabilities in North Carolina. This research and findings are to be used in the state's vocational rehabilitation plan.

Data stored in the CFS provides a unique opportunity to gain insights into North Carolina's labor market. During the report period, through the CFS website⁵ and The LEAD Feed⁶ page LEAD researchers carried out and published several studies that focus on the particular occupations and social groups:

- "Employment and Higher Education Enrollment of High School Graduates in the COVID-19 Era"⁷
- "Exploring the Short-Term Outcomes of North Carolina High School Graduates"⁸
- "The Earnings Race: Comparing Wage Progression Across UNC College Majors"⁹
- "Insights on Post-Prison Employment from the NC Reentry Outcome Reporting System"¹⁰

All these analyses have been undertaken in collaboration with the CFS partners including the UNC System Office, the NC Community College System, NC Department of Public Instruction, and NC Department of Adult Correction. While LEAD has provided the analytical capacity, the partner agencies have developed a deep understanding of the outcomes of their programs and populations served.

Further research, analytical and reporting efforts included support to the Governor's Education Cabinet, continued collaboration with myFutureNC. LEAD staff integrated information from the CFS in various presentations related to education, workforce development, and the economy. These informative sessions included presentations at various stakeholder meetings: NCWorks Partnership Conference;

⁵ <https://nccareers.org/cfs/>

⁶ <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/news/the-lead-feed>

⁷ <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/blog/2023/01/23/employment-and-higher-education-enrollment-high-school-graduates-covid-19-era>

⁸ <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/news/the-lead-feed/exploring-short-term-outcomes-north-carolina-high-school-graduates>

⁹ <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/news/the-lead-feed/comparing-wages-across-majors-by-race>

¹⁰ <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/news/the-lead-feed/nc-post-prison-employment-outcomes>

NCWorks Commission Quarterly Business Meetings; State Reentry Council Collaborative meeting; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's A.I.M. Conference; North Carolina Justice Center meeting; IEI's Emerging Issues Forum; the North Carolina Employment and Training Association (NCETA) Conference; and National Association of State Workforce Agencies.

Producing and Disseminating Workforce and Education Performance Information and Outcomes

During the report period, LEAD staff successfully completed work on expanding the North Carolina Tool for Online Workforce and Education Reporting (NC TOWER)¹¹. NC TOWER is a web-based delivery tool using information from the CFS to information on employment and wage outcomes and higher education enrollment for more than 1.2 million students who graduated from schools in the North Carolina Community College System and the University of North Carolina System over nearly two decades. In partnership with the NC Department of Public Instruction, LEAD has expanded NC TOWER by adding secondary education data, which was successfully accomplished in February 2023. NC TOWER now includes data to explore workforce and education outcomes for all NC public high school graduates by school district, demographic characteristics, CTE status and program. LEAD also provided support to various webinars to introduce these new features to DPI staff.

In 2023, LEAD launched North Carolina Reentry Outcome Reporting System (NC-RORS)¹² — an interactive data tool that reports post-prison employment, wage earnings by industry sector, broken out by gender, race/ethnicity, and in-prison program participation for individuals who have exited state prisons over the past 25 years. NC-RORS is based on information submitted to the CFS by the NC Department of Adult Correction (DAC) and Division of Employment Security (DES) and is designed to shed light on the labor market outcomes of formerly incarcerated individuals and allowing workforce professionals and criminal justice stakeholders to better understand the barriers faced by people getting out of prison, to develop more effective reentry services, and to help them to reintegrate into the workforce.

LEAD continued to provide updates to the Workforce Service Delivery Outcome Dashboard¹³ that was developed in collaboration with the Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS), the Local Workforce Development Boards (WDB), and the NC Association of Workforce Development Boards. The dashboard utilizes data provided to the CFS by DWS to report the number of participants served and services provided by each WDB. It includes outcome measures such as post-program participation employment and wage information.

In addition, LEAD staff continued updating and enhancing the NC Labor Supply and Demand Dashboard¹⁴. Data in the CFS is utilized to support the dashboard, including the number of students graduating and obtaining post-secondary credentials from the NC Community College System and the UNC System. The Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER) has nominated NC Labor Supply and Demand Dashboard as a winner of the 2023 Community & Economic Research Award in the "Best State LMI Product

¹¹ <https://tower.nc.gov>

¹² <https://analytics.nccommerce.com/NC-RORS/>

¹³ <https://analytics.nccommerce.com/NC-WDB-Services/>

¹⁴ <https://analytics.nccommerce.com/NC-Labor-Supply-Demand/>

or Collaboration Supporting Workforce System or Jobseekers" category. This award is presented to organizations who have made a significant impact on the field of community and economic research.

Strategic Partnership Activities

LEAD continued to be an important partner in the North Carolina State Longitudinal Data Service (NCLDS), which represents a recent collaborative initiative among three cornerstone segments of the education-workforce system:

- Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) — designed to provide integrated early childhood education, health, and social service data from participating agencies. This system is administered by North Carolina Division of Health and Human Services;
- North Carolina School Works (NCSW) — a federated system that links data from early learning to workforce. This system is administered by the NC Department of Public Instruction and is a collaborative effort with various entities including the NCCCS, the UNC System, the NC Independent Colleges and Universities, and the NC Department of Commerce;
- The Common Follow-Up System (CFS) — a repository of workforce and education data which is administered by the NC Department of Commerce's Labor and Economic Analysis Division.

This initiative is to build a roadmap to modernize the NCLDS and provide policymakers and education/workforce stakeholders with access to timely and actionable information for use in policy and business decisions. Design of the system and coordination of all functions among all entities are carried out in cooperation with the North Carolina Education Cabinet while technical and operational support is provided by GDAC.

PARTICIPATION SUMMARY ACROSS THE YEARS

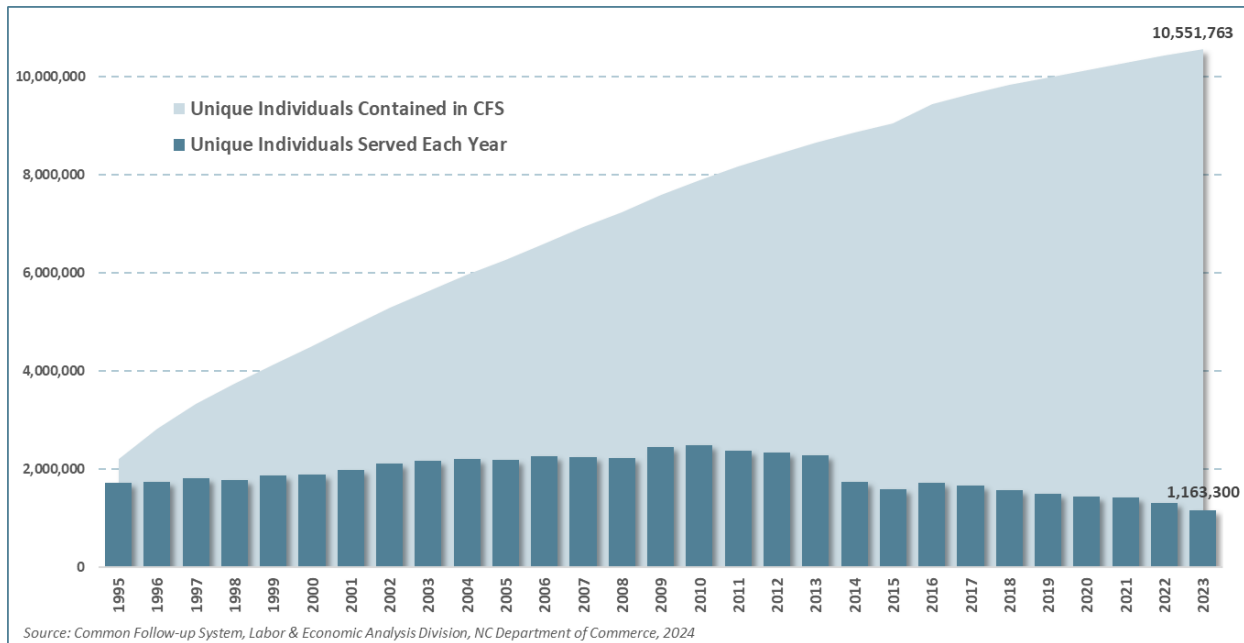
CFS has expanded dramatically since it started in the early 1990's. LEAD and the contributing agencies have made concerted efforts to incorporate information regarding additional programs and the individuals they serve, as well as to solicit the participation of other divisions or agencies. The analyses that are included in the following sections reflect data supplied by the contributing entities for services that were provided through June 2023.

Figure 1 shows the total number of unique individuals included in the system between the 1994-1995 and 2022-2023 program years¹⁵, as well as the number of individuals served each year by publicly funded education and workforce training programs contained in CFS. The system currently includes information on over 10.5 million unique individuals.

The total number of unique individuals within the CFS was obtained by performing a total unique count of validated Social Security Numbers contained in the system across all contributing agencies by program year. Analyses of data indicate that the number of individuals who received services through one or more of the contributing entities ranged from the high of 2.3 million in program year 2010-2011 to 1.1 million in the most recent 2022-2023 program year.

¹⁵ Program year runs from July 1 through June 30.

Figure 1. Growth and Scope of the Common Follow-up System Since Inception, PY 1995 to 2023



The following entities provided information on individuals enrolled in education and employment training programs during the 2022-2023 program year:

- **North Carolina Department of Adult Correction (DAC)**
- **North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI)**
- **North Carolina Department of Commerce**
 - **Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS)**
- **North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**
 - **Division of Services for the Blind (DSB)**
 - **Division of Social Services (DSS)**
 - **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)**
 - **Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disability, and Substance Abuse (DMH)**
 - **Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS)**
- **North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS)**
- **University of North Carolina (UNC)**

In addition to the information supplied by the education, employment and training agencies, the DES provided CFS a wealth of employment and wage information as well as information on Unemployment Insurance claims and benefit recipients.

Analyses of agency’s historical data in CFS provide an understanding of the scope of the system, as well as an overview of service provision by contributing agencies over time. Table 1 presents information regarding the number of individuals served by each of the contributing agencies by year as well as the total number of individuals served across all contributing agencies. Counts of the number of individuals by each agency were obtained by performing a unique count of individuals with SSNs submitted by the agency by program year. The agency totals over the ten-year time period are counts of unique individuals

across multiple years. Individuals can receive services from a given agency across multiple program years. The unique count of individuals from all agencies within a given year are unique counts of individuals across agencies. Individuals may be served by more than one agency in a given year or across years.

TABLE 1. Individuals Served by Agency and by Program Year

Agency	Program Year										Individuals served per agency, 2014-2023
	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	
NC Division of Aging and Adult Services	--	--	321	341	313	316	249	185	234	534	924
NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disability, and Substance Abuse	--	--	6,405	6,897	8,021	7,819	7,648	6,235	5,915	5,249	19,230
NC Department of Adult Correction	191,292	183,066	195,067	190,353	187,130	183,040	168,014	153,867	146,878	145,737	494,191
NC Department of Public Instruction	183,636	201,036	433,510	416,514	381,791	333,490	270,266	217,265	170,780	107,323	927,655
NC Division of Services for the Blind	3,656	3,213	3,249	3,166	2,856	2,983	2,970	2,410	2,483	2,573	8,843
NC Division of Social Services	291,355	18,568	24,038	49,213	12,362	15,449	14,448	11,921	10,712	9,963	360,261
NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services	57,854	48,642	57,370	51,336	47,404	45,981	40,917	34,543	32,615	31,226	167,307
NC Division of Workforce Solutions	422,253	469,939	388,755	346,694	303,369	296,902	353,354	425,969	344,589	214,650	1,913,354
NC Community College System	697,060	659,784	621,279	602,962	580,202	566,959	516,094	473,704	484,147	516,405	2,547,754
University of North Carolina System	233,399	233,382	239,038	240,699	243,272	246,664	249,364	253,425	251,462	245,253	848,275
Individuals served per program year across all agencies	1,733,262	1,590,395	1,728,646	1,676,140	1,565,047	1,504,579	1,442,621	1,423,293	1,312,565	1,163,300	4,774,156

Source: Common Follow-up System, Labor & Economic Analysis Division, NC Department of Commerce 2024

Note: Because individuals may be served by more than one agency in a given year or across years, rows and columns may not add to the totals. All counts only include participants with valid SSNs.

Over the ten-year period spanning July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2023, over 4.7 million individuals received services through the contributing agencies. This includes 1.9 million individuals who received a variety of workforce services through the DWS which is the state administrative entity for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and Title III programs¹⁶. Over 2.5 million individuals participated in education and training programs through the NCCCS, which is responsible for administering WIOA Title II programs. While DWS and NCCCS delivered services to large numbers of individuals, North Carolina’s public school system provides the building blocks upon which other education, employment and training services rely. During the same period, more than 927,000 individuals were enrolled in public high school programs¹⁷. UNC is the state’s publicly supported university system and provides educational programs to over 848,000 individuals.

Several agencies provide services to very specific sub-populations. The Division of Social Services provided employment and supportive services to more than 360,000 Work First and Food Stamp Employment and Training Program participants over the ten-year period, while the Department of Adult Correction

¹⁶ The 2023 report incorporated an enhanced methodology to better reflect measuring DWS’ WIOA Title I and III program participation. The new method may have impacted the count of program participants; however, it utilizes the timing of services that individuals receive, instead of relying solely on program registration and completion, and provides a more accurate representation of program enrollment and completion.

¹⁷ The reported number of high school students can be lower due to adoption of eLink solution to improve data quality. However, the number may grow higher over time as more data becomes available in eLink.

provided services to over 494,000 offenders in prison, or on probation or parole. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services provided rehabilitation services to over 167,000 individuals with physical and mental disabilities, and Division of Services for the Blind provided vocational rehabilitation services to more than 8,800 blind, visually impaired and multi-handicapped individuals.

It is important to keep in mind that some entities are authorized to provide services to large segments of the population (e.g., DWS and NCCCS), while others are authorized to provide services to very specific sub-populations based on stringent eligibility criteria including occupational goal, income, disability type, severity of disability, and educational requirements (e.g., DSS, DVR, DSB and UNC).

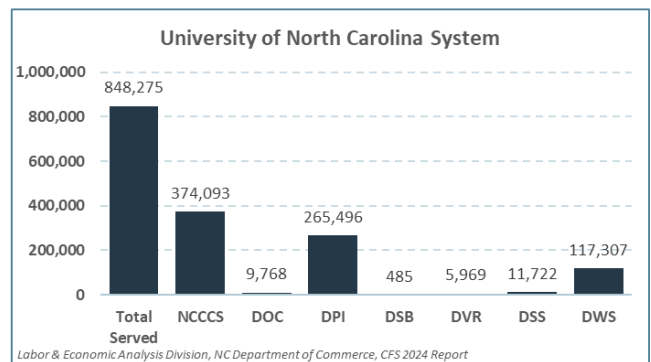
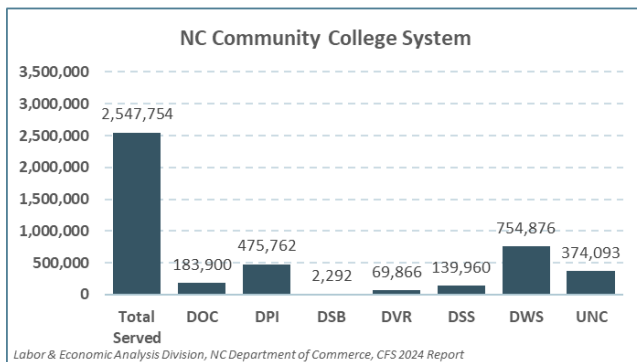
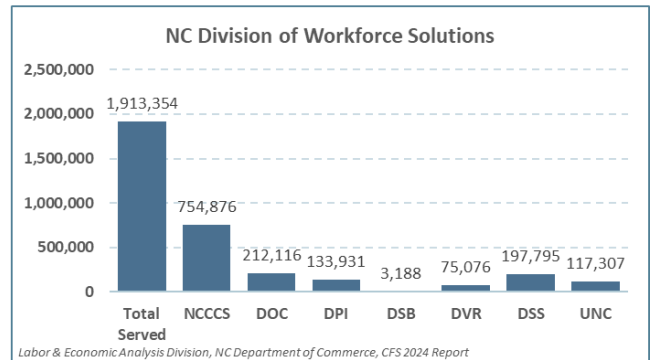
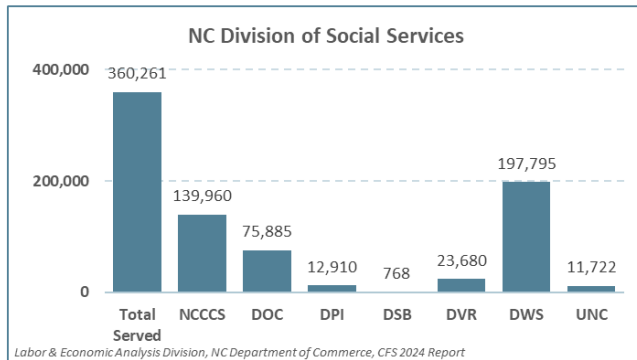
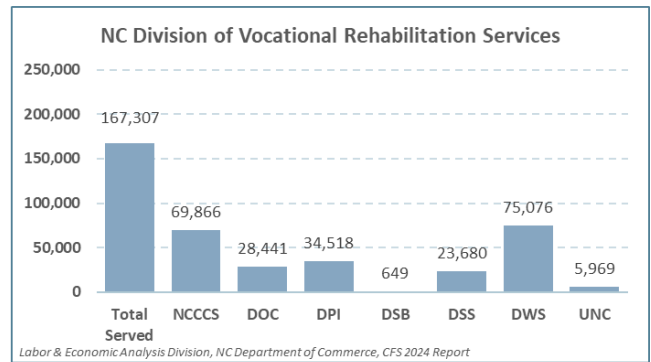
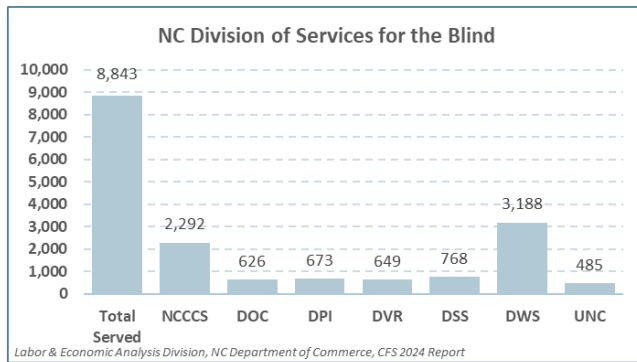
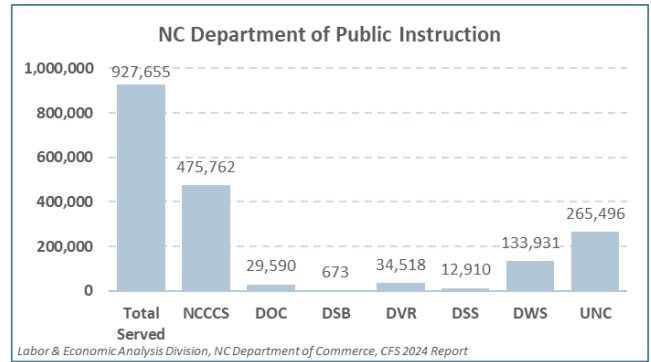
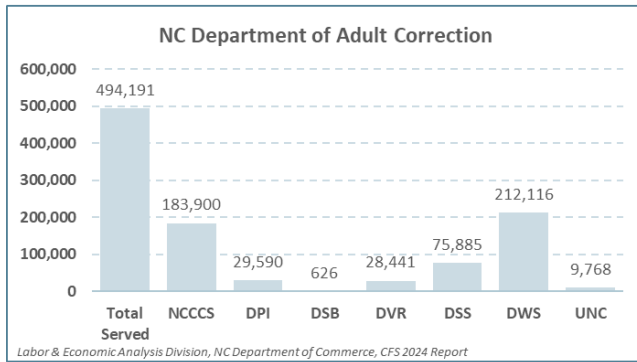
INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG AGENCIES IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES

A significant feature of the CFS is its longitudinal structure, which fosters the examination of the interrelationships among entities in the overall provision of services and an understanding of the path individuals follow while utilizing these services. Several initiatives at both the State and National level have called for the coordination, collaboration, and integration of services to individuals across education, employment, and training programs. These initiatives include the NCWorks Career Center System, Workforce Investment Act, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as well as endeavors by the education, employment, and training agencies themselves.

To provide an understanding of the interrelationships among entities in the provision of services, data were analyzed both within and across the last ten program years (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2023). These analyses utilized data from each of the contributing agencies. These agencies vary in terms of their organizational structure. That is, some of the agencies encompass several divisions within a given agency, others encompass a single division within a given agency and others encompass the combined work of staff across multiple agencies and programs. The data provided by each of these agencies includes information regarding one or more programs and/or services.

Analyses focused on determining the unique number of individuals who received services through each agency, the unique number of individuals who received services across agencies and the number of individuals found in common among the agencies. Graphs with the results of the analysis are provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Total Unique Individuals Served by Each Agency and Number of Individuals Also Served by One or More of Other Agencies Program Years: 2013 - 2014 through 2022 - 2023

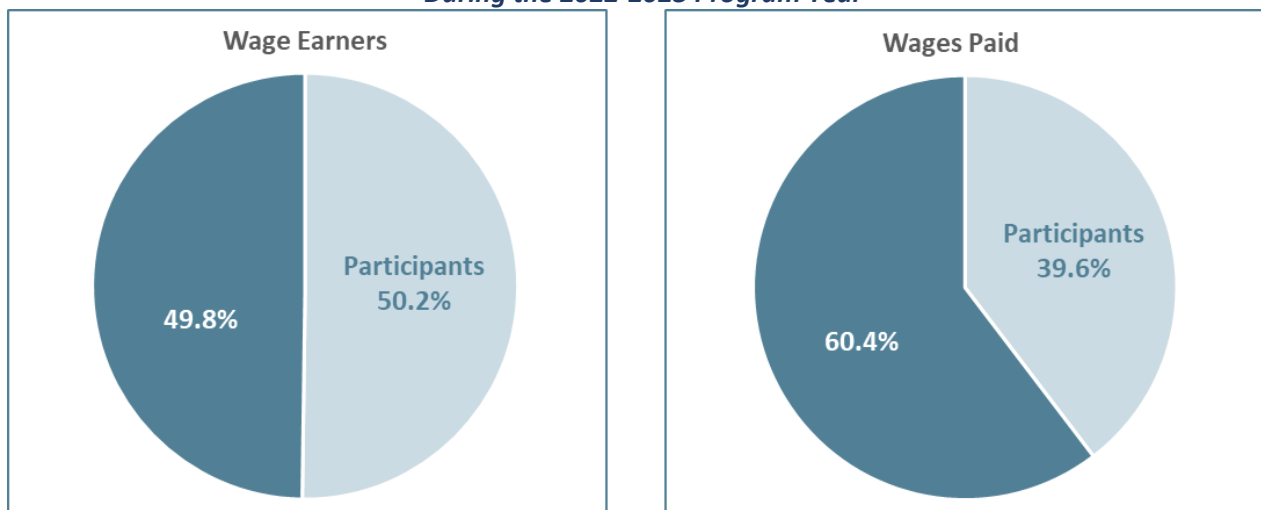


RELATIONSHIP OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED TO THE NORTH CAROLINA ECONOMY

In addition to providing information regarding the number of participants served by each agency, CFS may also be utilized to provide an understanding of the relationship between participants of the state's education, employment, and training programs and the overall economy.

During the 2022-2023 program year, over 5.6 million unique individuals worked in jobs covered by North Carolina's unemployment insurance laws with their wages reported to the DES and these individuals earned over \$299.4 billion in total wages. Of these over 5.6 million wage earners, approximately 2.8 million (or 50.2%) participated in education, employment, and training programs through one of the participating agencies during the ten-year period from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2022. These program participants earned \$118.6 billion in total wages or 39.6% of all wages reported to the DES in PY 2022-2023.

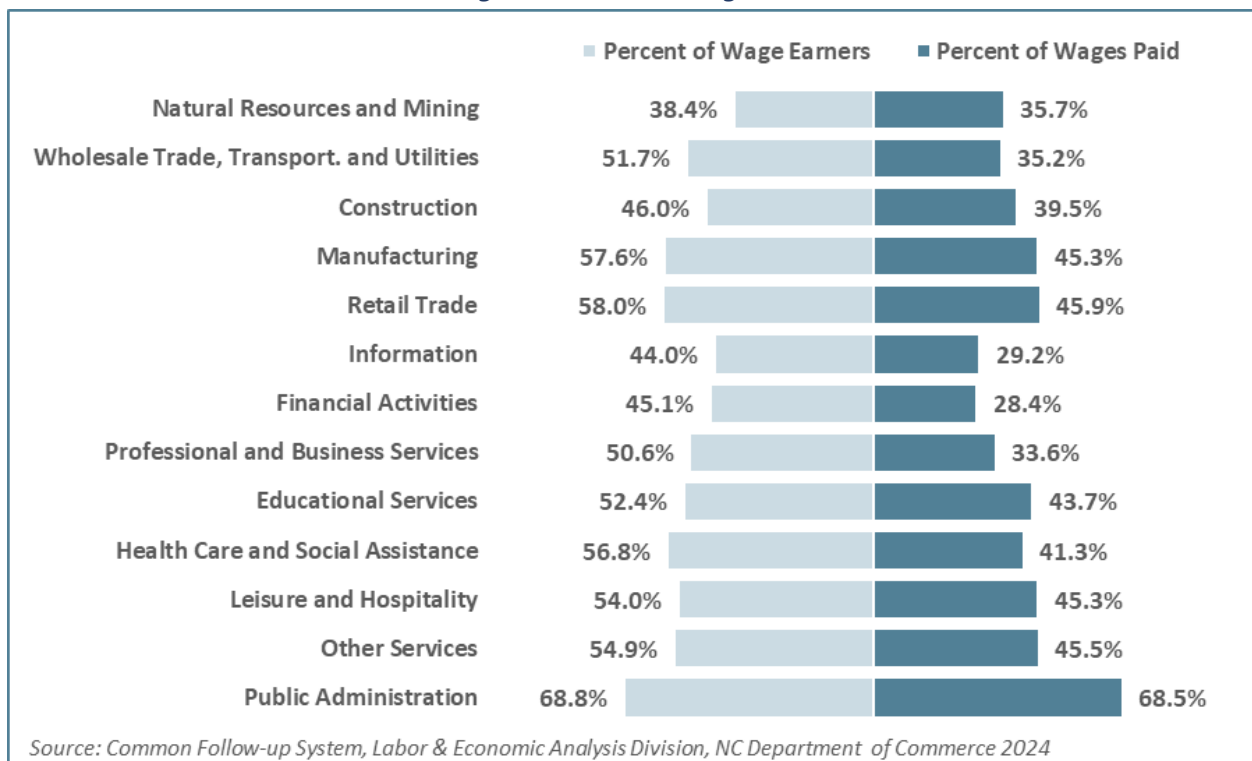
Figure 3. Ratio of Participants of North Carolina's Education, Employment and Training Programs (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2022) to All Wage Earners and Wages Paid During the 2022-2023 Program Year



Source: Common Follow-up System, Labor & Economic Analysis Division, NC Department of Commerce 2024

Further analyses demonstrate that vast majority of individuals employed in most of the state's major industry sectors had participated in programs and services provided by one of the contributing agencies in the last ten years (Figure 4). More than half of individuals employed in the following major industry sectors have been program participants of the contributing agencies in the last ten years: Wholesale Trade, Transport, and Utilities (51.7%), Manufacturing (57.6%), Retail Trade (58.0%), Professional and Business Services (50.6%), Educational Services (52.4%), Health Care (56.8%), Leisure and Hospitality (54.0%), Public Administration (68.8%), and Other Services (54.9%).

Figure 4. Ratio of Participants of North Carolina’s Education, Employment and Training Programs (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2022) to All Wage Earners and to All Wages Paid by Industry Sector During the 2022-2023 Program Year



The analyses also revealed that at least 30% of the wages in all major industry sectors (except for Information and Financial Activities) were paid to individuals who had participated in programs and services through one of the contributing agencies in the last ten years. These results clearly indicate the connection between education, employment, and training programs and the state’s economy as well as the continued need for coordination among education, workforce development and economic development efforts.

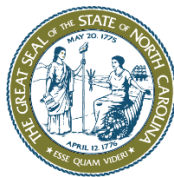
OPERATION SUMMARY

North Carolina’s education, employment and training system plays a fundamental role in the overall mission of developing and promoting the highly skilled workforce, improving the quality of life for North Carolinians, and preparing the state and its communities to compete in the global economy. The Common Follow-up System is an effective mechanism for providing information regarding the agencies, programs, and participants that comprise this system. The CFS is a valuable resource for estimating the educational and employment outcomes of individuals who participate in various services, understanding of the path individuals follow while utilizing these services, and demonstrating the integral relationship that exists between the services provided by the state’s education and workforce partners and the state’s economy.

Many state agencies and local entities rely on LEAD to keep them up to date on economic conditions. As North Carolina continues to recover from the pandemic, data in the CFS is critical for monitoring the economic recovery so leadership, policymakers, and agency service providers can direct resources to their most effective uses in education and workforce training programs.

Prepared By:
Labor and Economic Analysis Division
North Carolina Department of Commerce

<https://www.commerce.nc.gov/about-us/divisions-programs/labor-economic-analysis-division>



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