

Accessing Emergency Aid: Best Practices from North Carolina's Finish Line Grant Program

October 27, 2022



Welcome!



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Questions & Conversation

- Submit your questions in the box
- Share on social media
 - Twitter: @FLCollegeAccess
 - #FCAN
 - #TalentStrongFL

This webinar is being recorded; all materials will be available within a week of recording



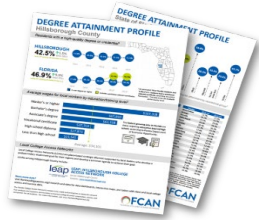
Our mission:

We lead the collaborative movement to ensure every Floridian achieves an education beyond high school and a rewarding career.

Our vision:

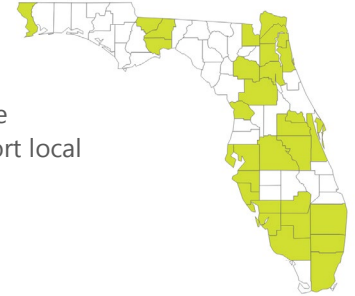
A Florida working together, where education is the pathway to economic mobility for all.

FCAN's Work



Research and Data FCAN publishes research and data on evidence-based practices and policy opportunities to strengthen Florida's talent pool.

Local college access networks (LCANs) LCANs support 82% of the state's population. These organizations are made up of community leaders who come together to create solutions and partnerships to support local talent development.



Statewide Initiatives FCAN coordinates 4 College Ready Florida initiatives that provides schools and community organizations resources to help students continue their education after high school.

7 Conditions for Success

Opportunity for everyone: To build a talent-strong economy, all Floridians need access to a postsecondary education and the supports to complete it.

Clear information and guidance: Students and families need exposure and counseling early and often to make informed decisions about their futures.

Affordability: Postsecondary education needs to be within everyone's financial reach, regardless of household income or life circumstances.

Multiple pathways to success: Floridians benefit from multiple learning opportunities for academic achievement and career advancement.

Lifelong learning: No degree or credential is "one and done;" Floridians need to prepare for career changes through continuous learning.

Effective use of data: Transparent access to data on education and economic outcomes, especially for Florida's diverse populations, helps achieve our goals.

Community collaboration: When community partners work together toward a shared vision, they remove barriers, build a robust workforce, and improve the quality of life for their regions.

Emergency Aid in Florida

Overview

- Florida boasts some of the most affordable tuition in the country. However, tuition is not the only cost that students experience when they attend college.
- Emergency or need-based aid (EA) programs can be a critical tool for ensuring that students' educations are not disrupted.
- There are many excellent examples of community- and institution-led emergency aid programs.



FLORIDA STATE
UNIVERSITY

DSA Emergency Relief Fund

Florida State University

Dr. Shelley Ducatt



Purpose

The DSA Emergency Relief fund was created to assist students who are experiencing a significant financial crisis.

The DSA Emergency Relief fund is for short term/temporary support for students.

Awards may not exceed \$1000.

The DSA Emergency Relief fund is a source of support for students who are experiencing financial strain due to an unexpected event, such as:

- loss of job
- family loss of income
- unexpected medical expenses
- hurricane or other large scale weather event
- large scale medical crisis



Creation

- Created after the wide-scale impact of Hurricane Michael to both the Panama City and Tallahassee campuses of FSU.
- Post Michael all available funding was utilized and the fund went dormant.
- During COVID the University and surrounding businesses committed to re-establishing the fund and provided significant support to students at FSU.
- The Emergency Relief Fund now functions on a daily basis to support students facing a personal financial crisis.
- Post Hurricane Ian the fund has once again dispersed funds to those students from counties most impacted by the hurricane while maintaining support to other students who are facing financial crisis for reasons unrelated to Ian.



Funding

- The DSA Emergency Relief Fund is funded solely by donations raised by the Division of Student Affairs and FSU Foundation.



Allocations

Hurricane Michael

Tallahassee Campus

117 students (\$46,625)

Panama City Campus

114 students (\$101,000)

COVID

Spring 2020

657 students (\$399,267)

Summer 2020

215 students (\$140,375)

Academic Year 21-22

25 students, \$23,434

Hurricane Ian*

39 students, \$30,500

Academic Year 22-23*

17 students, \$14,190

**To date



Contact Information

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North Carolina
Community College System

Finish Line Grants Overview

Florida College Access Network

October 27, 2022



Presenters

North Carolina Community Colleges System Office

- James “JW” Kelley, EdD
Associate Vice-President of Student Services
- Allison Gahrmann
Finish Line Grants (FLG) Coordinator



Finish Line Grants Timeline

2016

Conceptualized as a “Governor’s Whim” program under NC Governor Roy Cooper

2018

Inception of program with all 23 NC Workforce Development Boards

2022

Transitioned to North Carolina Community Colleges System (NCCCS)



Overview of the FLG Program

- The Finish Line Grant program was managed by the Department of Commerce and operated as a partnership between community colleges and local workforce development boards from 2018 to September 2022
- Initially funded with \$7 million federal funding (Governor's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act WIOA Discretionary Fund)– now GEER-funded with \$3.5 million initial funding
- As of April 30, 2022, 8,300 students had received \$4.6 million in emergency aid under the Department of Commerce program
- Available to all North Carolina community college students who meet eligibility requirements



Current Eligibility Requirements

5 Qs

1. Has unforeseen financial hardship?
2. Enrolled in postsecondary degree/certification program?
3. 50% of postsecondary degree/certification complete?
4. GPA 2.0 or greater?
5. COA not exceeded?

Five Qualifying Questions

1. Has an *immediate*, unforeseen financial hardship
2. Is enrolled in postsecondary degree/certification program (including current semester)
3. Has completed 50% or more of enrolled postsecondary degree/certification
4. Has a 2.0 minimum GPA
5. Cost of Attendance (COA) has not been exceeded



Monitoring & Reporting

<https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/student-services/finish-line-grants>

- Anticipate regular monitoring to ensure accurate reporting
- Funding sources may be subject to strict audit practices

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Finish Line Grants

The Finish Line Grants program aims to help students complete their training when facing unforeseen financial hardships. Finish Line Grants can be used for course materials, housing, medical needs, dependent care or other financial emergencies that students face through no fault of their own. Local community colleges and workforce development boards must submit a joint proposal to be an approved partnership to administer the Finish Line Grants program.

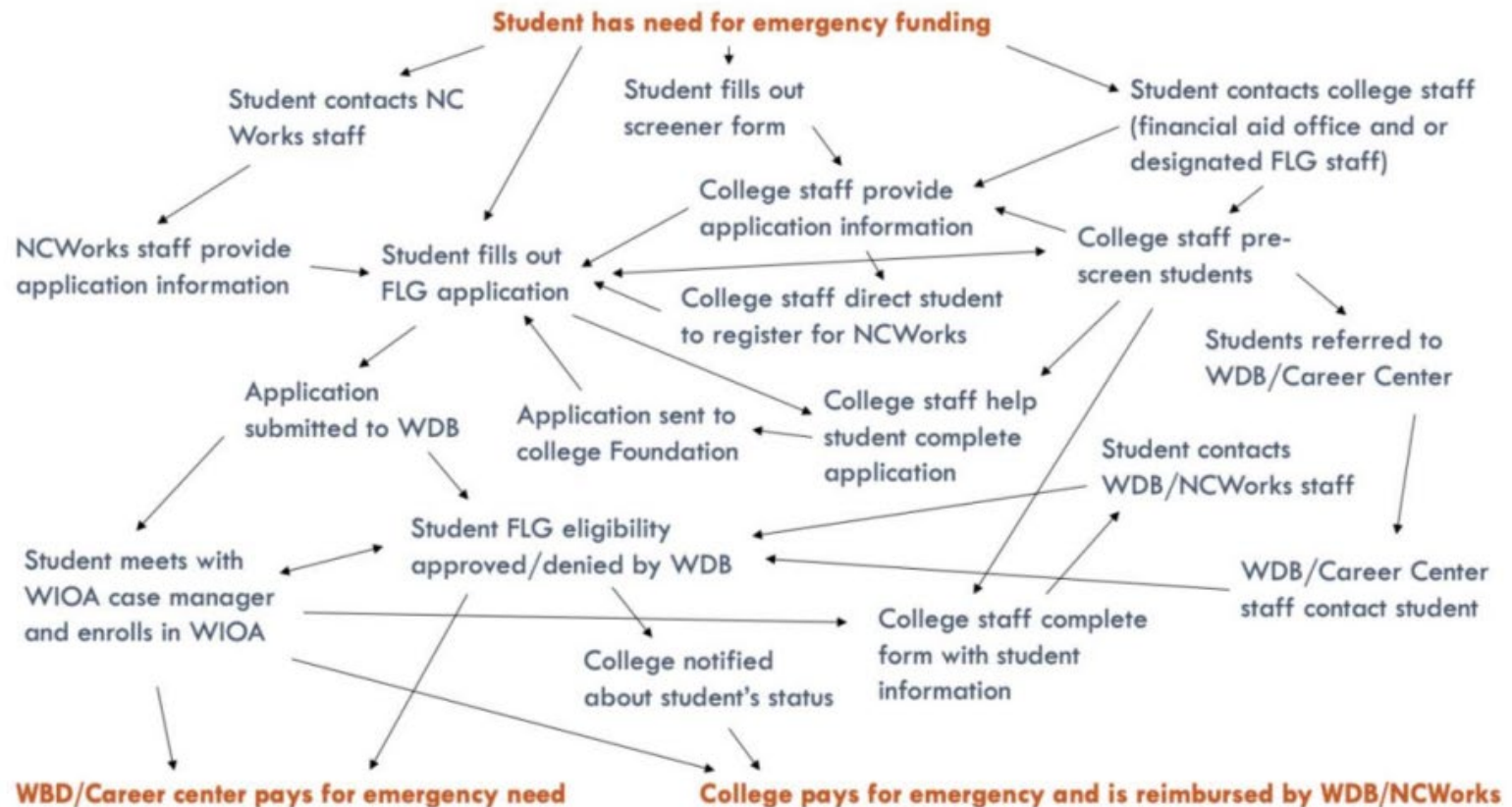
At the August 2022 meeting, the State Board approved the allocation of \$3.75 million to support the Finish Line Grant program. This program, initially started in 2018 as a partnership between the Department of Commerce and community colleges, provides emergency financial aid to community college students who are halfway to completing a certificate or degree and face an unanticipated emergency. The program transitioned from the Department of Commerce to the N.C. Community College System on Oct. 1, 2022.

8-19-2022: Governor Cooper Directs New Federal Funding to Further Support Postsecondary Students and New Teachers | NC Gov. Cooper®

Attachment	Size
Allocation for Finish Line Grant: July 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023; Revised: 8/20/2022	704.86 KB
Recommended Practices for Local Partnerships Administering Finish Line Grants - Updated 7-12-22	549.93 KB
Finish Line Grants Guide and Q&A as of October 1, 2022	389.36 KB
Finish Line Grant Transition 8-26-2022	530.09 KB
Finish Line Grant Funding Notice	227.38 KB
Certification and Agreement for Funding Under GEER	333.53 KB
GEER Funding Notice	213.31 KB
FLG Student Application Template	299.58 KB



Varied Local Processes Identified



SOURCE: Recommended Practices for Local Partnerships Administering Finish Line Grants https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/sites/default/files/basic-pages/student-services/flg_recommended_practices_07.12.22.pdf



“Crossing the Finish Line”

Attainability/Outcome Tracking

- Internal college Financial Aid tracking (Colleague) allows overall student progress
 - Cost of Attendance thresholds
 - Demographics
 - Data mining
- College System Office retrieves data for reporting purposes without a PII concerns





Pre-submitted Questions

Questions:

1. What are the most common student needs that the program aids?
2. How has the program impacted retention and graduation rates?

Type of Assistance

Accommodation for disabilities

Automotive

Course materials

Dependent / Childcare

Dental - Student

Fuel Card

Housing - Rental

Internet

Licensure Exam Fee

Medical - Student

Medical - Dependent

Optical - Student

Transportation (non- private vehicle)

Tuition / Fees

Utilities



Pre-submitted Questions

Questions:

1. How do we help students to help themselves?
2. How do you avoid fraudulent claims?



Pre-submitted Questions

Questions:

Please share tips for balance between ensuring program controls and helping vulnerable students who most need the funds.