



Careers Electric™ Request for Proposals:

Grant Application Guidelines and Instructions

Summary

The NC Community Colleges Foundation, in partnership with the NC Community College System Office (System Office) and Wake Technical Community College (Wake Tech), will select ten (10) community colleges to participate in **Careers Electric™**. Careers Electric™ is a performance-driven, education and training investment designed to strengthen North Carolina's ability to meet rapidly accelerating demand for skilled electrical and electrification professionals across emerging and traditional industries. Participation in this Careers Electric™ grant is focused on capacity-building, positioning colleges to become regional leaders in electrification workforce development while expanding access to high-wage, high-growth, stable career pathways for students. This initiative is intentionally structured to support programs that are critical to the state's economic future but are often cost-prohibitive to launch and difficult to scale without external investment.

Background

This grant is part of Careers Electric™, a broader statewide strategy driven by Wake Technical Community College (Wake Tech), the North Carolina Business Committee for Education (NCBCE), NC Community Colleges Foundation and System Office, Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP), and Families and Workers Fund (FWF), all supported by the Siemens Foundation and a coalition of other companies, to address urgent electrical workforce shortages that threaten North Carolina's economic growth, infrastructure resilience, and national competitiveness.

North Carolina faces a convergence of forces driving unprecedented demand for skilled electrical workers **across both residential and industrial/commercial sectors**, including:

- Expansion of artificial intelligence and hyperscale data centers,
- Electric vehicle manufacturing and charging infrastructure,
- Renewable energy generation and microgrid development,
- Grid modernization and disaster recovery, including rebuilding in Western North Carolina, and
- Aging workforce demographics with large-scale retirements.

At the same time, the pipeline of trained electricians is shrinking, instructional capacity is constrained, and training programs struggle to keep pace with employer needs. These challenges require coordinated, system-level intervention rather than isolated programmatic solutions.

Program Overview

Careers Electric™ establishes a **North Carolina Electrification Training Network** that aligns community colleges, high schools and CTE programs, employers and industry partners, workforce agencies, and philanthropic and public investors around standardized training models, stackable credentials, accelerated pathways, and shared accountability for outcomes.

Within three years, Careers Electric™ is intended to strengthen North Carolina's electrical workforce pipeline, create a scalable, data-driven training model, and serve as a **national template** for electrification workforce development that other states can replicate. Ultimately, Careers Electric™ seeks to increase the pipeline of Electrical Systems Technology AAS completers and expand the pipeline of licensed electricians.

Funding Model

Each selected college may receive **\$250,000 over two years**, distributed under a **pay-for-performance funding model** through the NC Community Colleges Foundation serving as the project's fiscal agent.

This model reflects the Siemens Foundation's grant conditions that funding is contingent upon satisfactory progress toward agreed-upon deliverables, performance measures, and reporting requirements. Grant payments are not entitlement-based; they are earned through demonstrated progress and compliance with performance expectations.

Under this model:

- Initial funding supports startup and early capacity expansion activities.
- Continued funding is tied to verified progress toward defined benchmarks, including:
 - EST program enrollment growth,
 - Expansion of instructional capacity (faculty, labs, equipment),
 - Employer engagement, and
 - Timely submission of performance and financial reports.

Funding may be reduced, delayed, or discontinued if performance metrics, reporting obligations, or grant conditions are not met. This ensures that public-facing investment remains tightly aligned with real, measurable outcomes and protects the integrity of the statewide initiative. For community colleges, this funding provides rare flexibility to address long-standing structural challenges, such as:

- Instructor shortages driven by industry wage competition,
- Aging or insufficient lab equipment,

- Limited instructional space, and
- Insufficient resources for recruitment and student support.

This Careers Electric™ grant is intentionally designed as a **capacity-building investment**, not a one-time program expansion. Colleges are expected to use funding to establish durable systems, staffing, curriculum, and partnerships that persist beyond the grant term.

Fiscal Year	Date Funds Available to Request from NCCCF	Q1 Oct - Jan	Q2 Jan - Apr	Q3 Apr - July	Q4 July - Oct
FY 1 \$140,000 Total	April 30, 2026		\$100,000		
	July 30, 2026			\$20,000	
	October 30, 2026				\$20,000
FY 2 \$60,000 Total	January 30, 2027	\$20,000			
	April 30, 2027		\$20,000		
	July 30, 2027			\$20,000	
	October 30, 2027				
FY 3 \$50,000 Total	January 20, 2028	\$25,000	\$25,000		

Eligibility for Funding

This opportunity is open only to colleges with an existing Electrical Systems Technology (EST) program. If applicable, colleges are strongly encouraged to demonstrate how their Workforce Continuing Education courses are stackable, portable, and intentionally aligned to support student progression into the EST program. Selected colleges are expected to:

- Scale programs quickly,
- Commit to performance-based accountability,
- Participate fully in end of semester reporting and evaluation,
- Collaborate with the System Office, Wake Tech, and NC Community Colleges Foundation in combining data for necessary annual reports, and
- Engage actively in the NC Electrification Training Network.

Selected colleges will commit to achieving **at least 20% growth in enrollment** in Electrical Systems Technologies (EST) programs over the grant period, through October 2028.

Each selected college may receive up to **\$250,000 over two years**, distributed under a **pay-for-performance funding model**.

Allowable Expenses

Funds may be used for strategic activities that directly support enrollment growth, including:

- Hiring, retaining, or upskilling faculty to expand instructional capacity,
- Purchasing and upgrading instructional equipment and lab infrastructure,

- Curriculum development and enhancement aligned with industry-recognized credentials such as NCCER and emerging electrification certifications,
- Targeted recruitment and marketing strategies, and
- Other investments that directly advance measurable capacity building and workforce alignment.

Important Dates and Milestones

Request for Proposal Released to Colleges	Application Due to NCCCS	Selection and Notification
February 17, 2026	March 20, 2026	April 10, 2026

- If you have any questions, send an email to the following email address: PSS-RFPs@nccommunitycolleges.edu. You can also contact one of the NCCCS employees listed below.
- NCCCS staff will host a Technical Assistance webinar on February 24th, 11am-12pm.

Reporting Requirements

- Colleges will be required to submit monthly fiscal reports and quarterly progress reports.

Application Process

To be eligible, colleges must submit a completed application. NCCCS will release the official application on February 17, 2026. The deadline for submission is 5pm, March 20, 2026.

Below is an overview of the sections contained in the application template:

- (1) A description of the EST program status and capacity
- (2) A description of the EST program employer and K-12 partnerships
- (3) A description of industry and workforce demand
- (4) A description of proposed EST program expansion efforts
- (5) Budget worksheet and narrative

Proposed applications must be in alignment with the goals of the NCCCS Strategic Plan:

- Goal 1: Recruit and retain top talent to enable the North Carolina Community College System to educate and prepare the State's workforce.
- Goal 2: Increase access and enrollment at North Carolina community colleges to meet the state's educational attainment goal and expand postsecondary opportunities.
- Goal 3: Provide resources inside and outside the classroom for all students to successfully enroll, persist, and complete a career program of study.

- Goal 4: Provide education, training, and credentials to develop the most competitive workforce in the nation.

A selection committee composed of representatives from the System Office, Wake Technical Community College, and Siemens Foundation or Boldly Go Philanthropy will review all applications. Selections will be made in accordance with the Foundation's [Guiding Principles and Practices](#) and will be informed by application responses.

Application Submission

- Colleges should submit a [Word document](#) using the following naming convention:
 - CareersElectric_CollegeFullName

Please do not submit a PDF of your proposal.
- Proposals must be submitted electronically through the NCCCS RFP Programs & Student Services email per the deadline outlined in the above section. That email address is: PSS-RFPs@nccommunitycolleges.edu
- Colleges should also submit any questions and their proposal to the following NCCCS staff: Andrew Gardner gardnera@nccommunitycolleges.edu

Evaluation Criteria

Below are the evaluation criteria for scoring and ranking proposals.

Section	Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Points Awarded
1	<p><u>Description of EST Program Status & Capacity</u></p> <p>○ (7-10 Points) The proposal clearly and thoroughly demonstrates that the program has strong potential to expand enrollment with additional resource investment as supported by enrollment data, instructional capacity, lab capacity, and barriers described.</p> <p>○ (3-6 Points) The proposal demonstrates that the program has limited potential to expand enrollment with additional resource investment as supported by enrollment data, instructional capacity, lab capacity, and barriers described.</p> <p>○ (0-2 Points) The proposal lacks a clear and thorough demonstration of the potential for program expansion.</p>	10	
2	<u>Description of EST Program Employer & K-12 Partnerships</u>	20	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>o</u> (16-20 Points) The proposal clearly and thoroughly demonstrates strong industry and K-12 engagement, with potential to expand employer partnerships to support program enrollment growth. <u>o</u> (8-15 Points) The proposal demonstrates industry and K-12 engagement, with limited potential to expand employer partnerships to support program enrollment growth. <u>o</u> (0-7 Points) The proposal lacks a clear and thorough demonstration of industry and K-12 engagement and potential for expansion. 		
3	<p><u>Description of Local Workforce Demand</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>o</u> (16-20 Points) The proposal demonstrates an industry demand for an expanded program, deep understanding of local industry needs, and the proposed program is highly relevant and feasible. Market research and demand analysis are thorough and convincing. <u>o</u> (8-15 Points) The proposal has some data to support the alignment with industry needs and/or employer engagement, but the narrative is not convincing. <u>o</u> (0-7 Points) The proposal lacks data and relevant details to support the alignment with industry needs and/or employer engagement. 	20	
4	<p><u>Description of EST Program Expansion Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>o</u> (16-20 Points) The proposal clearly describes a realistic strategy for enrollment growth. <u>o</u> (8-15 Points) The proposal demonstrates a commitment to EST program expansion, but there are gaps in the approach, and the narrative is not convincing. <u>o</u> (0-7 Points) The proposal lacks a demonstrated commitment to EST program expansion, enrollment growth, enhanced partnerships, and student support. 	20	
5	<p><u>Budget</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>o</u> (7-10 Points) The budget description is detailed, realistic, and well-justified to address barriers and expand program capacity. 	10	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o (3-6 Points) The budget is mostly realistic but has some minor discrepancies in the budget justification. o (0-2 Points) The budget has issues or lacks clarity in their budget narrative. 		
	Total Possible	80	