

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025**

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**HOUSE BILL 1077**

Short Title: NC Working Families Economic Relief Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Crawford, Alston, T. Brown, and Lopez (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Appropriations, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 29, 2026

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM AT NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY  
3 COLLEGES TO EXPAND INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE IN THE STATE AND TO  
4 PROVIDE FUNDS TO THE UNITED WAY OF NORTH CAROLINA TO EXPAND ITS  
5 VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

6 Whereas, it is estimated that 225,000 North Carolina filers are eligible for the Federal  
7 Earned Income Tax Credit but do not claim the credit; and

8 Whereas, it is estimated that the average Earned Income Tax Credit is about \$2,894  
9 per filer; and

10 Whereas, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides a federal program, the  
11 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, for which grants are available. VITA  
12 provides for individuals who make below a certain income threshold per year to have their taxes  
13 completed by an IRS-certified individual for free, allowing them to take full advantage of every  
14 federal tax credit and return more of North Carolina's hard-earned dollars to our citizens, putting  
15 more money into our economy; and

16 Whereas, community colleges can provide work-based learning opportunities for  
17 students; Now, therefore,  
18 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

19  
20 **PART I. GRANT PROGRAM AT NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO**  
21 **EXPAND INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE IN THE STATE**

22 **SECTION 1.(a)** Program Established. – Within the funds appropriated in subsection  
23 (d) of this section, the State Board of Community Colleges shall establish a grant program for  
24 participating community college campuses to offer courses to students to become tax preparers  
25 as part of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program and to facilitate providing VITA  
26 services to all students on campus, as well as community members. The Internal Revenue Service  
27 (IRS) offers free tax help through VITA to (i) people who generally make sixty-nine thousand  
28 dollars (\$69,000) or less, (ii) persons with disabilities, and (iii) limited English-speaking  
29 taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. The goal of the grant program  
30 shall be for community colleges to provide work-based opportunities to students while  
31 facilitating access to the VITA program for their local communities.

32 **SECTION 1.(b)** Components of the Program. – In administering the grant program,  
33 the State Board of Community Colleges shall require participating community colleges to do at  
34 least the following:



- 1 (1) Offer the following courses to students interested in becoming certified as tax  
2 preparers for the VITA program:  
3 a. A fall curriculum course for the purposes of teaching basic tax  
4 accounting and training students on the preparation of federal and  
5 North Carolina tax returns. The course shall lead to the completion of  
6 the IRS Link and Learn training to become certified as tax preparers  
7 for the VITA program.  
8 b. A spring work-based learning course where students commit to 15  
9 hours per week from January through April 15 to prepare taxes.
- 10 (2) Designate a faculty champion to facilitate the program.  
11 (3) Provide VITA services to be offered to all students on campus as well as  
12 community members.

13 **SECTION 1.(c)** Applications for Grants. – A community college shall apply for a  
14 grant to the State Board with a plan to implement the VITA program on its campus with at least  
15 the following information:

- 16 (1) A time line for implementing the curriculum and a recruitment of students to  
17 become certified as VITA tax preparers.  
18 (2) Options for paid work-based opportunities for students as part of the spring  
19 curriculum. Students shall be provided hourly compensation for tax  
20 preparation assistance during tax season as part of the program.  
21 (3) Start-up and ongoing costs for personnel, including site coordinators and  
22 quality reviewers, and budget for continuing costs for running the VITA  
23 program.

24 **SECTION 1.(d)** Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to  
25 the Community Colleges System Office the sum of one million three hundred eighty thousand  
26 dollars (\$1,380,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year and six hundred ten  
27 thousand dollars (\$610,000) in recurring funds beginning with the 2026-2027 fiscal year to  
28 implement the grant program in accordance with this act. The funds shall be used as follows with  
29 any unexpended funds returned to the System Office:

- 30 (1) For the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the sum of seven hundred ninety thousand  
31 dollars (\$790,000) in nonrecurring funds may be used for creation of the  
32 curriculum, for bonuses of up to one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500)  
33 per community college receiving a grant to support a faculty champion on  
34 campus, to support hiring personnel for the VITA program, and to establish  
35 work-based learning opportunities for students.  
36 (2) For the 2026-2027 fiscal year and for subsequent fiscal years, six hundred ten  
37 thousand dollars (\$610,000) in recurring funds may be used to support hiring  
38 personnel for the VITA program and to establish work-based learning  
39 opportunities for students. The System Office may use up to fifty thousand  
40 dollars (\$50,000) of the recurring funds appropriated for the program each  
41 fiscal year for administrative costs associated with administering the grant  
42 program.

43 **SECTION 1.(e)** Of the nonrecurring funds appropriated to the Community Colleges  
44 System Office in subsection (d) of this section for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the sum of up to  
45 five hundred ninety thousand dollars (\$590,000) shall not revert at the end of the 2026-2027  
46 fiscal year but shall remain available until the end of the 2027-2028 fiscal year to provide bonuses  
47 of up to five hundred dollars (\$500.00) per community college receiving a grant to support a  
48 faculty champion on campus, to support hiring personnel for the VITA program, and to establish  
49 work-based learning opportunities for students.

50 **SECTION 1.(f)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
51 Revenue the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027

1 fiscal year and one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in recurring funds beginning with the  
2 2026-2027 fiscal year to provide training and technical assistance to community college campus  
3 personnel and students participating in the grant program in accordance with this act. The  
4 Department of Revenue may use the funds appropriated pursuant to this section to contract with  
5 a third-party vendor to provide technical assistance and support for the program.  
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7 **PART II. FUNDS TO THE UNITED WAY OF NORTH CAROLINA TO EXPAND ITS**  
8 **VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

9 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Office of State  
10 Budget and Management the sum of eight hundred forty thousand dollars (\$840,000) in  
11 nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to be allocated as a directed grant to the United  
12 Way of North Carolina to expand its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. These  
13 funds shall be used to increase the number of VITA locations, provide dedicated staff to support  
14 evaluation of the program and recruitment, provide needed software and office supplies for the  
15 program, and improve marketing and communication efforts to include multilingual materials,  
16 connection to online resources where internet is available, and educational opportunities on  
17 household budgeting, financial planning, and other resources to improve financial skills. These  
18 funds shall not revert at the end of the 2026-2027 fiscal year but shall remain available until the  
19 end of the 2027-2028 fiscal year.  
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21 **PART III. EFFECTIVE DATE**

22 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2026.