

## High Performance Workforce

### Vision for 20/20

**North Carolina workers will adapt quickly to changing demands of the global workplace through their abilities to use information, think analytically, work in teams, and use technology. North Carolina workers will be prepared for these changes as a result of a partnership between the public and private sector that recognizes the importance of family-sustaining wages and benefits for all jobs. This combination will result in establishing a standard for a prosperous economy. Employers will recognize employees as an important asset and provide compensation and work environments that value workers.**



**Goal 1: North Carolinians will have the knowledge, competencies, and skills needed to adapt to the ever-changing global economy.**

The globalization of the economy hits home especially hard in the way it affects jobs. North Carolina competes for jobs not just with Ohio and Georgia, but with South Korea, Germany, and Mexico. Sadly, many North Carolina workers today lack the knowledge and skills they need for the changing workplace.

#### **Facts:**

- By 2006, nearly 1/2 of all US workers will be employed in industries that produce or intensively use information technology products and services.
- 60% of new jobs in the early 21st century will require skills possessed by only 20% of today's workforce.
- North Carolina has an average of 170,295 jobs that need to be filled each year.
- The top 3 fastest growing occupations in North Carolina are computer engineers, system analysts, and health care aides.
- The workforce between the ages of 25 and 34 is expected to decrease in the next few years.
- 60% of layoffs from 1998-1999 were in rural areas even though rural areas possess only 41% of total jobs.
- 31 rural counties were at least 50% above the state average in unemployment rates.
- In 1997, 52% of adults scored at the lowest two levels of literary proficiency.
- Only 43% of NC employers were satisfied with how colleges and universities prepared students for work, according to the Institute for Research in Higher Education.

#### **Targets:**

1.) **Adult Literacy.** North Carolina will move up 22 places to become one of the nation's top 20 states in adult literacy.

2.) **Employer Satisfaction with Graduates.** By 2010, nine out of 10 graduates of NC's education system will be rated satisfactory or better. While 9 out of 10 university graduates now are rated satisfactory or better by their employers, only 71 percent of high school vocational graduates achieve that rating. Comparable data on community college students are not yet available.

3.) **Technical education.** By 2020 North Carolina will increase by 30% the number of students with certificates or diplomas in computer science, engineering, and related technical training programs. North Carolina must increase its ranking by eight places to rank in the top 20 states in the number of graduates with a master's or a doctorate in science and engineering.

**Goal 2: Employees will have access to continuous learning opportunities to remain competitive in the global economy.**

Workers today must be continuously learning new skills. Technology brings rapid changes to the workplace, and economic restructuring means people today face more frequent job changes than their parents did. North Carolina's community college system has earned high marks for its workforce training programs. *Expansion Management* magazine ranks ranked those programs best in the nation two years in a row. Moving forward, classes offered over the Internet and other distance education initiatives are expected to play an increasingly important role in workforce training and retraining.

**Facts:**

- Low-skill manufacturing jobs are declining. NC lost more than 110,000 jobs in textile and apparel manufacturing alone in the 1990s. (p83, f314)
- Overall manufacturing losses continue. Between February 2000 and February 2001, the state lost 3% of its manufacturing jobs. (p83, f314)
- 12,740 students took Basic Skills courses at community colleges in 1998-99. Just under 10% went on to enroll in occupational extension courses or curriculum programs.
- Nationally, 28% of noncredit, community college students had already attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

**Targets:**

1.) **Continuous Learning.** By the year 2010 North Carolina will have 4% of the working age population, or 75,000 additional people, enrolled in vocational/ technical community college programs, an increase of 2 percentage points.

2.) **Basic Skills Training.** By 2010 the number of Basic Skill students who enroll in community college occupational extension and curriculum programs will increase by 30%.

**Future Measure:** As part of planning, the Community College System is collecting information on the percent of high demand occupations encompassed by training programs and that information will be available in 2001 and will be used as a future measure.

**Goal 3: Workplaces in North Carolina will be safe places for employees to work, provide competitive salaries, offer growth opportunities, and respect workers.**

Just as workers must adapt to new realities, so must employers. Increasing social mobility gives good workers opportunities to seek new jobs with better compensation and benefits. The benefits they seek often include the flexibility to deal with the demands of young children and elderly parents. At a minimum, both workers and society demand that every workplace provides a safe, healthy environment.

**Facts:**

- The share of workers to receive defined-benefit pension plans has fallen from 30% to 20% over the past 15 years.
- The average North Carolinian earns \$2,000 less than the average US citizen.
- The average earnings per week in Wake County are nearly twice as high as those earned in some rural counties.
- North Carolina is rated 4th in the nation for highest fatal occupational injuries.
- In North Carolina, violence is the 2nd highest reason for fatalities in the workplace.

**Targets:**

1.) **Per Capita Income.** North Carolina will rank among the top 20 states in per capita income and in workers earning a living wage. The average North Carolinian currently makes \$26,603 a year -- \$2,000 less than the average US citizen. North Carolina must move up 11 places to be among the top 20 states in per capita income by 2010.

2.) **Workplace Safety.** The rate of workplace injuries and illnesses will decrease to 4 per 100 full-time workers by 2010. This means reducing workplace injuries by 1.6 injuries per 100 workers.

**Recommendation:** A program will be designed to prepare workers for the changing global economy through a partnership that links government, education, and employers.