



Internship Pilot for Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum in Information Technology; **Part of the Experience More Initiative**

As part of the NGA Policy Academy to Expand Work-Based Learning in STEM Careers and the Experience More Initiative, NCBCE is developing an internship pilot for individuals with autism spectrum disorder, (ASD).

This pilot will address their high unemployment (only 20% of adults with autism are employed) and employers' need for highly intelligent, loyal, detail-oriented workers in the information technology field. Individuals on the spectrum also provide employers valuable neurodiversity, enhancing the productivity of their existing workforce.

There are existing pilot programs at Wake Tech, CPCC and Pitt Community Colleges that focus on work and social skills for individuals on the spectrum who have graduated from high school or college.

We are building on these programs supplementing the support and curriculum in work skills and adding technical skills that will result in an industry recognized credential. The goal of placing these young people in internships or apprenticeships that eventually result in employment. The curriculum will be designed to teach the technical skills that companies need.

NCBCE is partnering with the DHHS Division of Vocational Rehab, Alliance Behavioral Healthcare, the Capitol Area Workforce Development Board, and the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities for the funding of job coaching and intern stipends. Wake Tech will provide technical training and UNC's TEACCH Autism program will provide job coaching and support services to the interns.

We need employers to give these young adults the opportunity to demonstrate their value to the company and host them at their sites for 12 weeks.

This will be the first state initiative to develop the pipeline for a neurodiverse workforce. Please contact Caroline Sullivan at 919-814-2023 | caroline.sullivan@nc.gov or Ashlie Bucy at 336-253-3941 | Ashlie.bucy@nc.gov for more information.