



NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Peter Hans, President

(Public Safety Memo PS18-04) **SUPERSEDED BY PS23-02 (See also CC23-003 and CC23-005)**

May 14, 2018

To: NC Community College Fire and Rescue School Directors

From: Margaret Robertson, Associate Vice President, Workforce Continuing Education
Kim Williams, Deputy Director, Office of State Fire Marshal

RE: Clarification of NC Community College Services to Minors Requirements

This memo serves as clarification of how the North Carolina Community Colleges, as Fire and Rescue Delivery Agencies, may support the development of minors towards involvement in the Fire and Rescue profession.

The North Carolina Community Colleges are uniquely focused on providing access to post-secondary education. The System is also highly engaged with industry and agency partners to develop the workforce required by employers and others to support the growth and economic health of the state. Along with the Office of State Fire Marshal, the community colleges are engaged in the recruitment and training of individuals interested in serving in the fire and rescue services including creating opportunities to expose young people to fire and rescue services.

One area of recruitment includes the efforts to reach out to high school students to ensure their awareness of the opportunities in fire and rescue as well as the initial preparation of skills to enter this environment. Local community colleges may play a role in reaching out to high school students in their training path but community colleges are bound by specific state laws that define how that engagement functions.

North Carolina General Statute 115D sets the framework of laws under which the community colleges operate. As it relates to serving minors there is specific language as to what programs colleges are permitted to provide. Specifically, around 'Continuing Education' courses the following language is relevant:

*§ 115D-20(4) "...local community colleges are permitted to offer the following programs: ...
(b) During the summer quarter, persons less than 16 years old may be permitted to take noncredit courses on a self-supporting basis, subject to rules of the State Board of Community Colleges.
(d) High school students 16 years and older may be permitted to take noncredit courses, except adult basic skills, subject to rules promulgated by the State Board of Community Colleges."*

This language is supported by the State Board of Community College Code which provides additional structure to how colleges apply general statute and policy on programs. Specific code language to this issue is found in 1D SBCCC 300.4(c)

"For the purposes of this subsection, the word "minor" shall not include minors who have graduated from high school. The major purpose of community colleges is to serve students who have graduated from high school, have obtained a high school equivalency diploma, or are beyond the compulsory age limit of the public school and have left public school. However, a minor may enroll in Continuing Education course sections subject to the following:

- (1) Minors Age 16 and 17. A minor, age 16 or 17, may enroll in Continuing Education course sections subject to the following conditions:
 - (A) Minors shall not displace adults.*
 - (B) Minors shall pay the registration fees associated with the course section except for cases where they meet eligibility requirements for a fee waiver. ...**
- (2) Minors Less than Age 16. A minor less than 16 years old may enroll in Continuing Education course sections subject to the following conditions: ...
 - (B) A college may provide classes for minors less than 16 years old only during the summer reporting term. These classes must be self supporting and may not be designated by the college to provide partial or full credit towards meeting high school graduation requirements. ..."**

Subject to local community college capacities and policies, community colleges may provide access to workforce continuing education training to minors 16 years and older. This may include involvement in fire and rescue training programs as determined by the college.

There is additional North Carolina General Statute language under the Department of Labor that provides opportunities for delivery agencies other than the community colleges to support the training of students less than 16 years old.

§ 95-25.5(n) Nothing in this section prohibits qualified youths under 18 years of age from participating in training through their fire department, the Office of State Fire Marshal, or the North Carolina Community College System. As used in this subsection, the term "qualified youth under 18 years of age" means an uncompensated fire department or rescue squad member who is at least the age of 15 and under the age of 18 and who is a member of a bona fide fire department, as that term is defined in G.S. 58-86-25, or of a rescue squad described in G.S. 58-86-30.

While this language does reference the North Carolina Community College System, it states that the labor section does not prohibit the participation in training of members who are at least the age of 15 and under the age of 18. This section does not nullify the language in §115D-20(4) referenced above.

North Carolina Community Colleges and the Office of State Fire Marshal are dedicated to developing a robust workforce pipeline for the fire and rescue services of the state. This includes the recruitment and sound training of individuals for this demanding profession.

CC:

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