NCDOT Aviation Career Education (ACE) Academy Program
Developing North Carolina's Aviation Talent Pipeline

■ **Applications for 2025 funding accepted through Nov. 15, 2024** ■

Program Overview

North Carolina's system of 72 public airports generates more than $72 billion of economic impact each year – 11% percent of the state's GDP – and more than 330,000 jobs.

North Carolina must inspire and develop a strong talent pipeline to fill those jobs and support this growing sector.

Public airports fuel a vibrant aviation economy that includes aerospace manufacturing and maintenance, air freight and military aviation, as well as on-airport businesses, from airlines to fixed-based operations, flight schools to crop dusting operations. Added to that is the state's rapidly expanding unmanned aircraft systems industry, which is opening new markets and new ways of doing business.

All of these businesses and industries spell jobs and opportunity for North Carolina people and communities.

The Aviation Career Education (ACE) Academy Program supports aviation workforce development by providing up to $5,000 per airport annually for public airports that host aviation career-focused summer academies for elementary, middle and high school students.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Aviation, in alignment with the Federal Aviation Administration's ACE Academy program, offers this financial support to help inspire young people to explore and pursue the many rewarding careers available in the state's aerospace sector.

Eligibility

N.C.'s 72 public use airports that are eligible for infrastructure development grants through the NCDOT Division of Aviation are eligible to apply for ACE Academy funding.

Airports are encouraged to team with a local educational or nonprofit organization to benefit from their expertise in

educating young people and to encourage strong airport-community connections.

2025 Funding

A selection committee will review applications and notify applicants of their funding determination for 2025 academies on Dec. 6, 2024.

Use of Funds

NCDOT funds must be used to cover the direct cost of ACE academies, such as supplies and vendor costs. Past ACE academies have purchased such items as flight simulators, field trip tickets, aircraft rides, model rocket kits and safety materials. NCDOT funds may not be used for administration or staffing.

Academy Requirements

Format. ACE academies must host at least 20 unique students (no double counting of students in different camps). Preference will be given to airports serving students in lower-socio-economic areas, as determined by the N.C. Department of Commerce county tier designation, and programs providing an engaging experience for as many students as practicable.

Content. ACE academies are encouraged to cover the following topics:

- Aviation/aerospace history, including N.C.'s legacy as "first in flight"
- Principals of flight
- Career discovery and planning (age appropriate)
- Exploring N.C. post-secondary aviation education programs
- Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS, or drones), including uses, regulations, FAA's The Recreational UAS Safety Test (TRUST) program and N.C. UAS educational offerings.

In addition, ACE academies must include a virtual or in-person presentation by the NCDOT Division of Aviation on aviation in North Carolina.

Academies can develop their own personality and themes, covering additional topics, or can expand on one or more of the suggested topics in greater detail.

Career Exploration. ACE academies should place a priority on exploring high-demand aviation and aerospace careers (manned and unmanned pilots, aircraft technicians, electronics, including coding and programming, avionics, air traffic controllers and engineers) and how N.C. students can gain education and credentials through N.C. community college and university programs to pursue those professions.

NCDOT Aviation can provide information and guidance on curriculum topics and connect academy hosts with resources and networks that can support their academy.

Application and Grant Award Timetable

- Oct. 8-Nov. 15 – Grant applications accepted
- Dec. 6 – Division notifies applicants of grant application determination
- February – Grant recipients and their academy details are publicly announced through joint press releases, social media and posting on the FAA ACE Academy website.

Reporting Requirements

As with any publicly funded program, reporting is required to ensure responsible stewardship of grant funds and maintain support for public funding. We strive to make reporting requirements simple and efficient for

grantees while meeting our fiscal and program responsibilities.

Reported items will allow the Division to report, promote and determine the effectiveness of this program, as well as plan for growth and improvements.

Grantees will be required to provide a post-academy synopsis and **report on these items within 30 days** of the academy end date:

- Dates, times and location
- Itinerary/schedule of activities
- Description (theme/curriculum focus)
- Number and demographic breakdown of participants (age, race, gender, county of residence)
- 1-10 photos of students participating in academy activities, with NCDOT permission form completed, allowing NCDOT to use photos (no names) of photographed students in promotional materials
- Copy of your student evaluation survey and summary of responses (NCDOT can provide an evaluation template, if desired)
- Itemized accounting with receipts and purpose of expenditure of grant funds
- NCDOT post-academy evaluation survey (online)

ACE Academy Annual Report

NCDOT will use information reported by academy hosts to create an ACE Academy Annual Report showcasing highlights, successes, photos and quantitative results. Grantees can use the report to thank their partners, advertise future years and garner additional support.

Ready to Apply?

Download the [application](#) and apply by Friday, Nov. 15, 2024.

Questions?

Contact Cyndy Falgout, Interim ACE Academy Program Coordinator, falgout@cyndyfalgout.com.