

NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

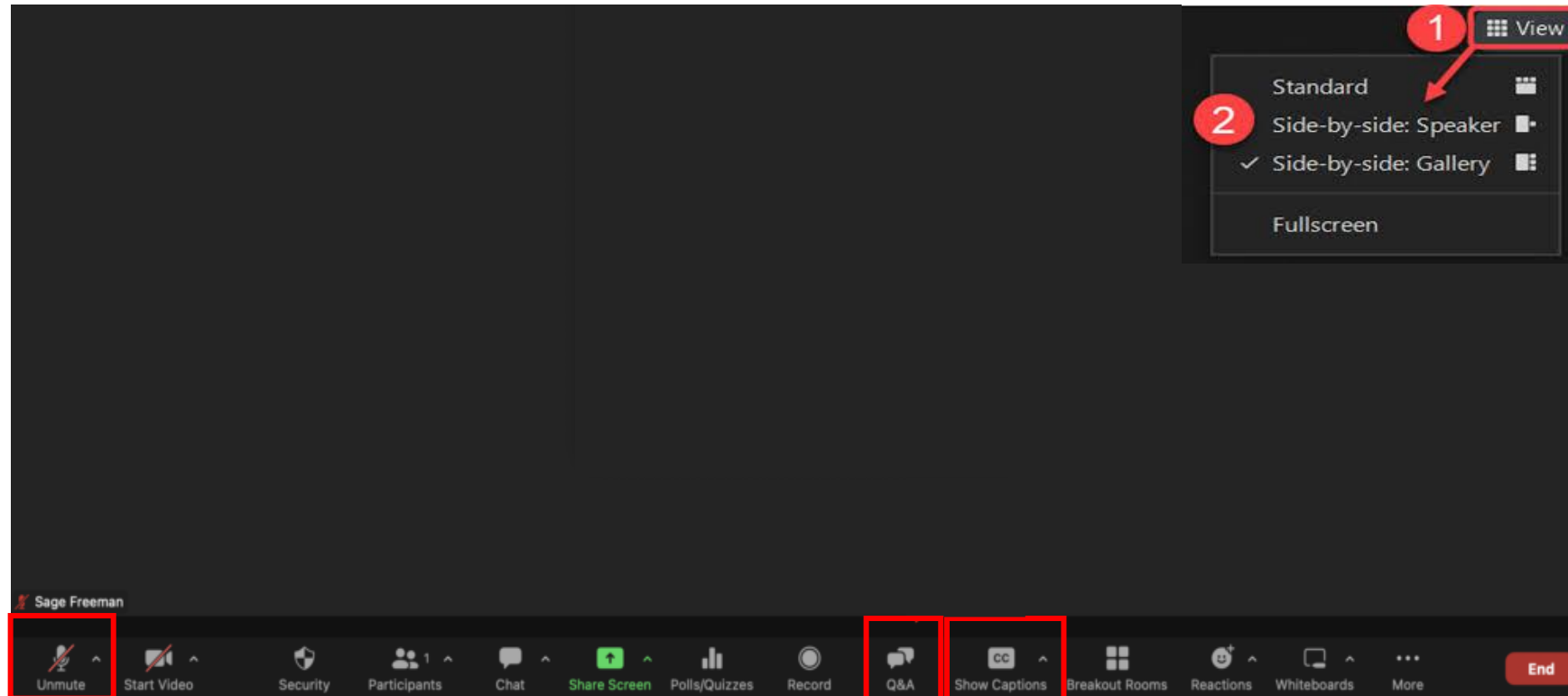
Inclusion Works Lunch & Learn Series

LiNC-IT Autism Employment Program

April 16, 2025



Housekeeping



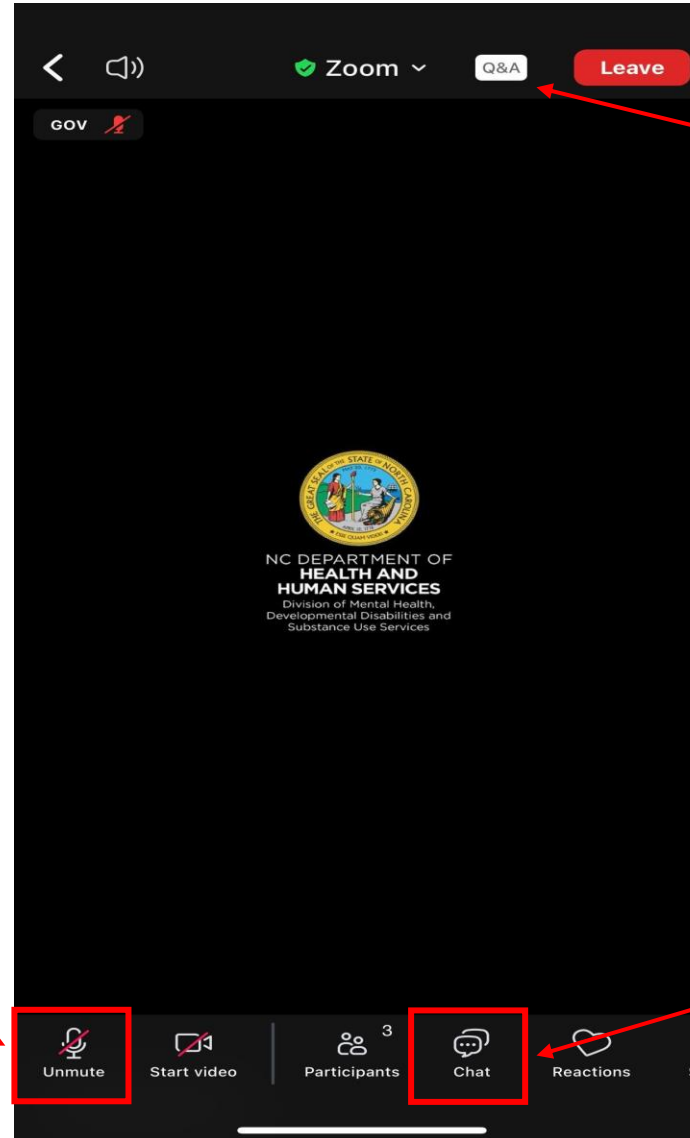
To adjust video layout:
1) Select the "View" feature located in the top-right hand corner of your screen and 2) select the option that best works for you

Mute your microphone for the duration of the call unless you are speaking or asking questions

Questions can be entered in Q&A feature by clicking this button

Closed-Captioning options are available: Select "Closed/Show Captions"

Housekeeping – Mobile Attendees



Questions can be entered in Q&A feature by clicking this button

Mute your microphone for the duration of the call unless you are speaking or asking questions

The chat function will be disabled during the call. Please submit questions using Q&A feature

Agenda

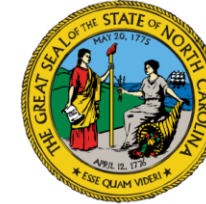
- 1. New Inclusion Works Resources
- 2. Autism Acceptance Month
- 3. LiNC-IT – Autism Employment Program
- 4. Stay Connected!



Introductions



Claire Colligan, MS, LCMHC, LCAS, CCS
I/DD Employment Lead, I/DD, TBI, & Olmstead
DMHDDSUS



NCDHHS



Michael Chapman
Director of Employment Services
UNC TEACCH Autism Program,
UNC School of Medicine, UNC Chapel Hill



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA

TEACCH
Autism Program

Services Across the Lifespan



Work Together NC

Possibility to Opportunity

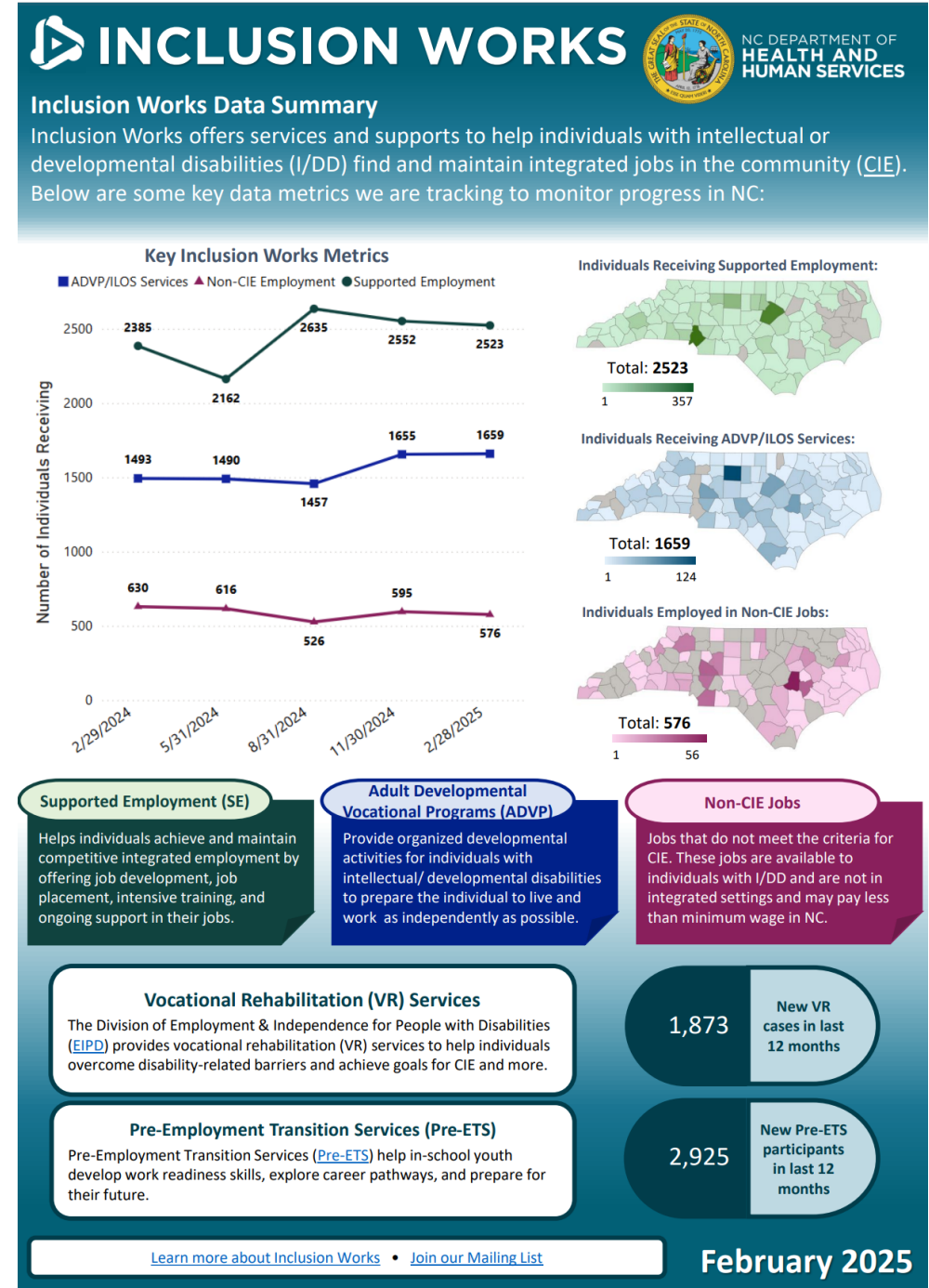
New Inclusion Works Resources

New Data Summary Webpage for Inclusion Works

We are excited to share some key metrics and data visualizations for Inclusion Works on the new [Inclusion Works Data Summary webpage](#). The data shows enrollment counts for employment services for individuals with I/DD, geographical differences across the state, and trends over time.

This data is used to understand the current employment landscape across North Carolina and support individuals to achieve CIE. This webpage will be updated periodically with the latest data.

This information is also available in an Infographic PDF: [Inclusion Works Data Summary Infographic](#)



New Bilingual tools about 1915(i) Services

DHHS has launched the updated webpage, with tools in English and Spanish, to help inform communities about 1915(i) home and community-based services, including what services are offered, who is eligible and how to access these services:

An additional updated 1915(i) website, which provides important information about 1915(i) in plain language, is also available at:

Download the toolkit



Medicaid.nc.gov/1915i



NC Medicaid 1915(i) Services

**Get support
at home or in
your community**



NC Medicaid 1915(i) services are for people with mental health conditions, substance use disorders, intellectual or developmental disabilities or traumatic brain injuries.

1915(i) services include:

-  **Help with daily activities**, like bathing or eating
-  **Job coaching** to find a job that is right for you
-  **Breaks** for you and your caregivers
-  **Help with costs** for moving to your own home
-  **Support for building skills**, like self-help and problem solving skills

Ask your NC Medicaid health plan about "1915(i) services."

Call the number listed on your health plan ID card.

Or call the NC Medicaid Ombudsman at 1-877-201-3750.



Learn more at medicaid.nc.gov/1915i

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is an equal opportunity employer and provider • 4/2025



Más información en medicaid.nc.gov/1915i-es.

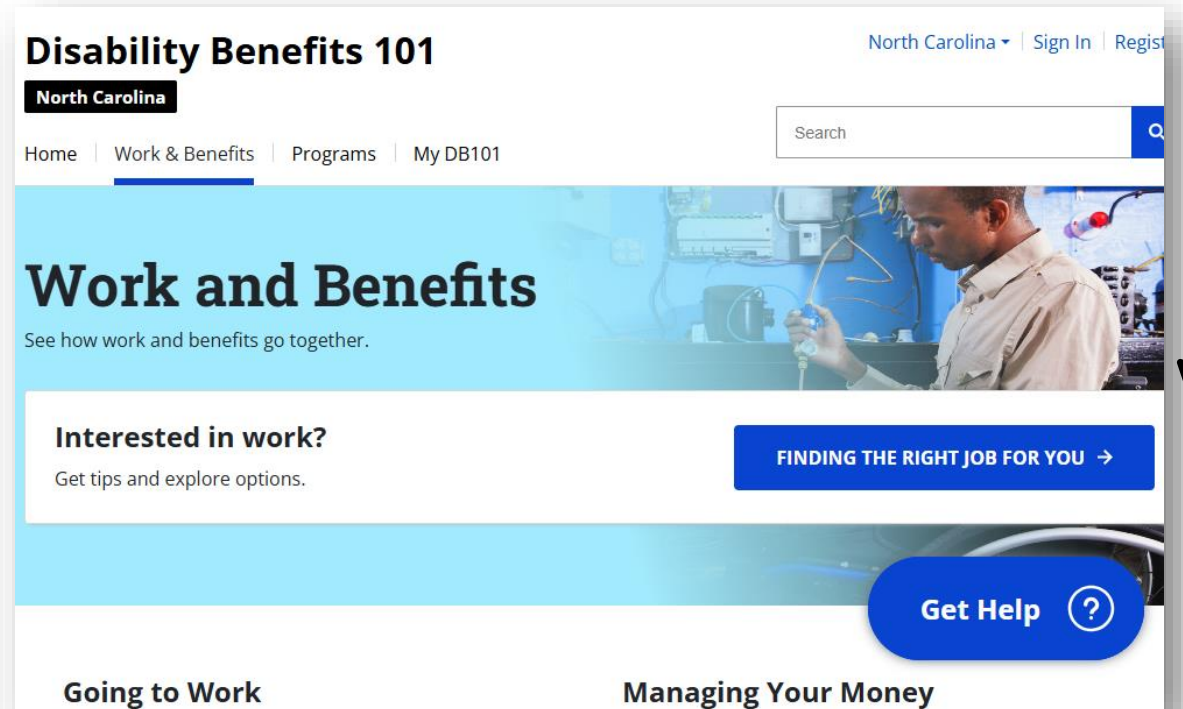
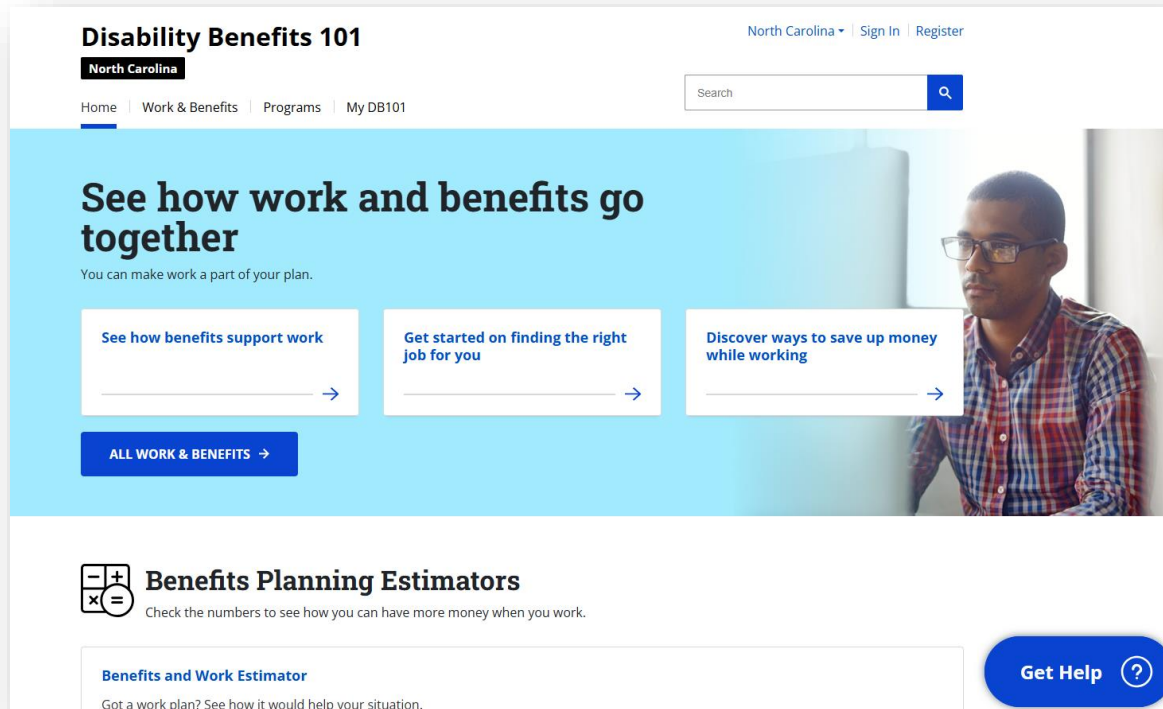
El Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de Carolina del Norte (NCDHHS) es un proveedor y empleador que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades • 4/2025



Disability Benefits 101

Disability Benefits 101 (DB 101) is an online directory that helps individuals with disabilities understand how work, benefits, and health coverage interact based on their specific state.

- It provides information in plain language with simple tools to help dispel myths and reduce confusion around public benefits, earned income, health insurance, and more
- NC-specific DB101 site will go live in **May 2025**



Autism Acceptance Month




April is Autism Acceptance Month

Autism Acceptance Month is a time to recognize and appreciate the unique talents, strengths, and perspectives of autistic people. Acceptance means more than just knowing about autism—it means making sure people with autism feel included, respected, and supported. It means listening to the voices of people with lived experience, challenging unfair stereotypes, and creating spaces where everyone can be themselves.





Autism Employment Program



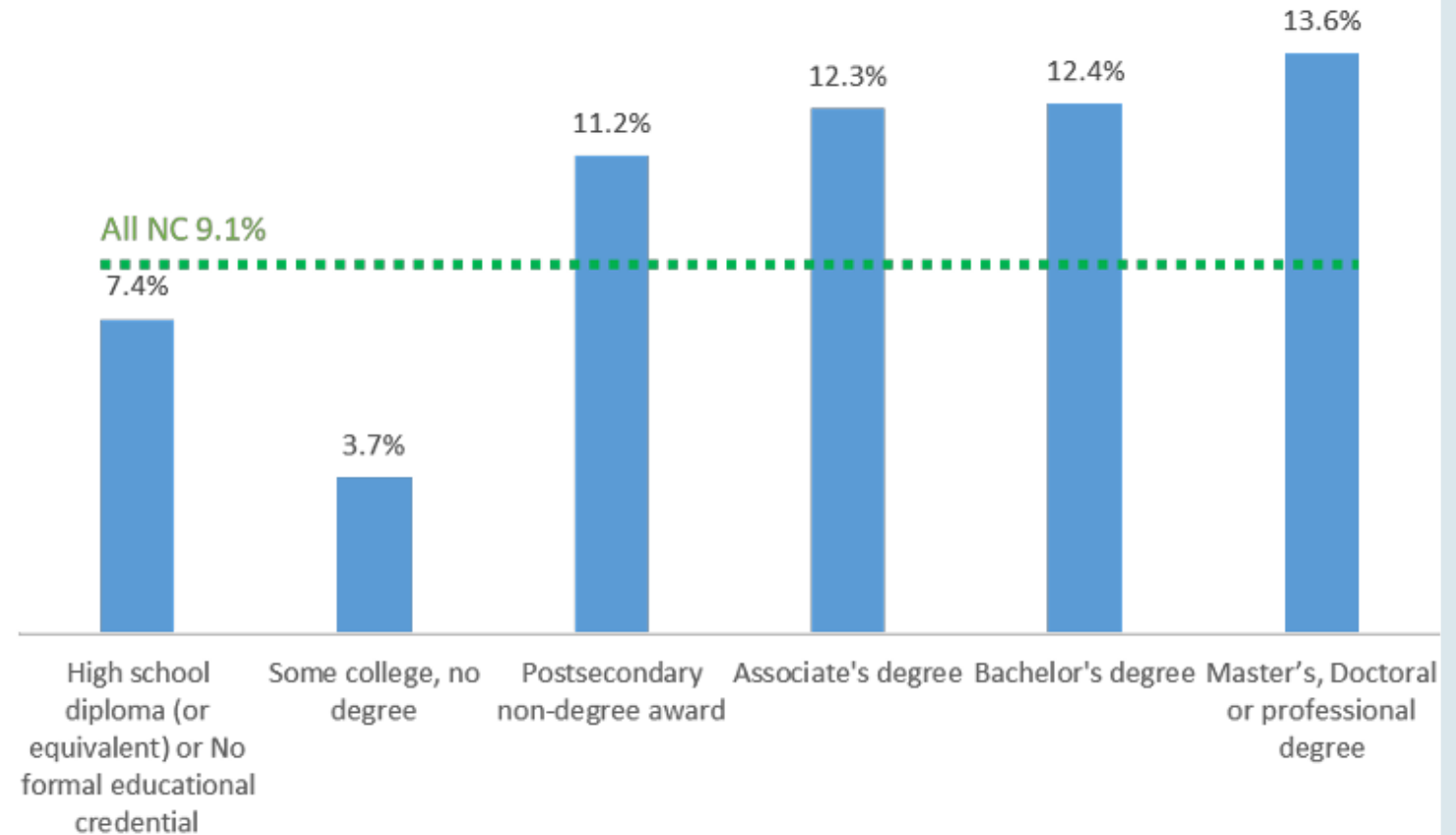
North Carolina Business Committee for Education, is a nonprofit out of the Governor's office that connects business, education and people to develop this pipeline.

Worked to establish the **LiNC-IT** collaborative that uses various state resources to support businesses and potential employees and employers.



Employment Opportunities Growing

- North Carolina is projected to have more than 446,000 jobs (new and vacancies) through 2030.
- When you factor turnover, there will be an average of 705,000 annual job openings of which 223,000 will require some type of education beyond High School.



Source: NC Department of Commerce: 2021-2030 Long-Term Employment Projections and US Bureau of Labor Statistics: Minimum Education Required for Entry into Occupations

National Autism Statistics

- Estimated 5.5 Million adults on the spectrum in the USA
- Given the population estimate and prevalence rates, approximately 70,700 to 111,600 youth on the autism spectrum turn 18 years old each year.
- However, only 1% of autistic adults that are estimated to need employment supports receive them.



National Autism Statistics



Employment and Other Day Activities

Had a paid job in the
community

14%

Worked in the community for
pay in settings that also employed
people without disabilities.

Were in unpaid, activities
in facilities

42%

Participated in unpaid activities
in facilities with others with
disabilities (sometimes called
day programs).

Had no work or activity

27%

Had no work or activities
in the previous two
weeks in community or
facility-based settings.

More Information on Employment

- People on the spectrum are among the disabled with the lowest employment rate.
- 34.7% of autistic people attend college.
- People on the spectrum with a college degree are less likely to be employed than those without a college degree.





Rough Estimate on NC Numbers

Extrapolating national data:

- Estimated 2,400- 3,800 individuals on the spectrum turning 18 each year.
- College bound estimates
 - 890-1300 will attend college
 - Roughly 800-1,100 each year will NOT find a job.
 - Roughly 10,000 college educated autistic adults unemployed over the next 10 years.

Barriers to Landing and Maintaining a Job

- Difficulty with traditional applications
- Getting “in the door”
- Difficulty with interviewing (groups, social banter/chitchat)
 - Marketing yourself appropriately to your audience
- Employers’ understanding of autism and “Success Enablers”
- Transportation
- Social demands included in the job
- Understanding their own needs and asking for needed supports



Launched in 2018, the **LiNC→IT Collaborative** is the first statewide workforce program to support **Autistic Talent**



“Most of society would like to count me out, but LiNC-IT stepped up and counted me in. Because of this program, I have a job and can support myself. Because of this partnership, my story has changed.”

- Michael Bell



Advantages of Disclosing with LiNC-IT



- ✓ Companies are more understanding of your needs and willing to make accommodations.
- ✓ Companies are seeking out quality talent and embracing the skills and perspective that individuals on the spectrum bring.
- ✓ Employers recognize that autistic talent often offers unique problem-solving skills, higher focus, and more productivity.
- ✓ Employers value dependability and loyalty.
- ✓ Individuals on the spectrum who often have unique perspectives and skills offer organizations a competitive edge.

Successful Employment

Successful employment requires a comprehensive model of support:

- Onboarding people: matching to the correct jobs, adapting the hiring process.
- Understanding autistic specific supports:
 - Autism awareness training for support staff and employers
 - Organization, communication and social differences
 - Long-Term Supports: recognizing supports may change over time, but the need is always present.
 - Awareness of needs of autistic employees in the work force and expertise to address those needs.



National:
37.5%

ASNC & TEACCH
83.5%



LiNC-IT's role with the Employer



- ✓ Train businesses
 - Autism awareness
 - Developing supports
- ✓ Identify compatible jobs
- ✓ Help employers tailor interview process to needs of autistic coworkers
- ✓ Train peer mentors
- ✓ Provide supports on the job that benefit you and your employer

LINC→IT

1

FILL OUT A LINC-IT APPLICATION

After that, you will be connected with a counselor from ASNC or TEACCH® to see if the program is a good fit for you.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

One needs an official ASD diagnosis to participate in LINC-IT. In certain cases, Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities can fund a psychological evaluation.

2

3

EMPLOYMENT AND INDEPENDENCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (EIPD)*

Call your local EIPD office, and indicate your interest in employment through LINC-IT. (EIPD was formerly known as Vocational Rehabilitation.)

4

CONTINUE EIPD PROCESS

Your EIPD counselor will meet with you a few times and determine your eligibility for services. If you are eligible, you and your EIPD counselor will develop your Individualized Plan for Employment.

5

REFERRAL TO ASNC OR TEACCH®

Your Individualized Plan for Employment will likely include a referral to ASNC or TEACCH® for job coaching, which would be paid for by EIPD.

6

JOB COACHING FROM ASNC OR TEACCH®

Your job coach can help you with your resume, practice interviewing, and identifying potential jobs from employers who are not a part of LINC-IT. They also provide support once you start employment.

7

LINC-IT PARTNERSHIP JOB OPPORTUNITIES

If an employer contacts LINC-IT about a relevant employment or internship opportunity, your resume may be submitted. Upon review, you may be invited to interview for the position.

Phase 1: Getting Started



- ☐ Learn how LiNC-IT works to bring employees and employers together.
- ☐ Sign up with EIPD
- ☐ Sign up with agencies offering autism-specific employment supports.
 - ASNC
 - TEACCH
- ☐ Work on identifying your employment goals

LiNC  IT



Phase 2: Job Matching



- ☐ Work on a good match for you and employer
- ☐ Modify the interview so you can demonstrate your skills
- ☐ Offer support during the interview for you and employer
- ☐ Assist with disclosure and advocacy

LiNC  IT



Phase 3: Finding Work



☐ Identify which fits best with your current goals.

☐ Internships

- 12 weeks
- Usually paid, but not always

☐ Direct hire Employment

☐ Educate employer on hiring and support of individuals

☐ Modify the interview process to bring out individuals full skill set.

☐ Provide direct support to ensure success during the interview.

LiNC  IT



Phase 4: On the Job



- ☐ Disclosure discussion with individual on the spectrum
- ☐ If needed, Autism understanding training for company staff
- ☐ Identify site-specific success enablers
- ☐ Help implement successful strategies
- ☐ Assist with coworker communication

LiNC  IT



Typical Supports or Success Enablers



- **Based upon your needs**
- **Examples:**
 - Designated work area/lunch area
 - Support to interact with employer
 - Written communication
 - Autism employee resource group
- **What do you think you might need?**



LiNC-IT Website



- www.LiNC-IT.org
- **Get involved:**
 - Participants
 - Employers
- **Resources:**
 - Useful for everyone.
- Reoccurring Webinars



[Interest Form](#) [Participants](#) [Employers](#) [Resources](#) [+](#) [High School](#) [Webinars](#) [News](#)



LiNC-IT: Linking North Carolina with Innovative Talent is an enterprising partnership of government, nonprofits, and employers.



Neurodiversity Internship Program



“We are really happy with the LiNC-IT program and the support we get from NCBCE, UNC TEACCH, and ASNC, and we are already seeing true business value from the diversity of thought, skills, and experiences these candidates bring.”

-Ro Lissenden

“I bring a new perspective to my team, and I work with exceptional speed and efficiency.” – LiNC-IT intern

“We see NC and the Triangle as a perfect environment to attract, support, and foster talent that sees the world a little differently - becoming the go-to location for neurodiverse talent and their families.”

-Todd Lineberger

“Our brains work inherently different than somebody who isn’t autistic. So, we’re gonna look at it differently. It’s just part of our existence.” – LiNC-IT intern

Questions?



For any specific questions or for more information about LiNC-IT, please reach out to:



mikechapman@unc.edu

Michael Chapman

Director of Employment Services

UNC TEACCH Autism Program,

UNC School of Medicine, UNC Chapel Hill

Stay Connected

Inclusion Works will be attending the following conferences:

- **NCARF** – May 1st
- **i2i (Insight to Innovation)** – June 10th -11th

Inclusion Works Lunch and Learn Webinars

- **Inclusive Employer Panel** – June 18th

Join Us for a special Panel of Employers in NC who will discuss their work and their inclusive hiring practices inclusive hiring practices.



Want to get connected? Check out these opportunities

Inclusion Works Advisory Committee

Purpose: To provide a forum to hear the perspectives and opinions of individuals, families, advocates, and providers around the updates and implementation of the Strategic Plan for CIE in North Carolina

Meeting Time: Third Tuesday of every 3 months at 11:00am. **Next Meeting on July 15th 2025.**

Interested in joining?

Email: Claire.Colligan@dhhs.nc.gov

Stay involved with updates from Inclusion Works!

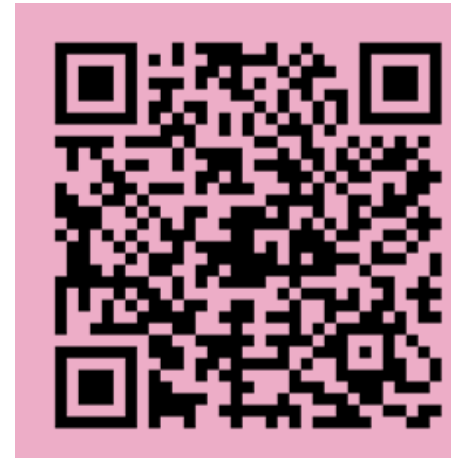
Register for our bi-monthly
[Lunch and Learns](#)



Visit the [Inclusion Works Website](#)



Join our [mailing list](#) and
receive community updates



Visit the [Work Together NC Website](#)



Questions?