

North Carolina Community Health Center Association
Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Initiative (MAAI)



Workforce Shortage in Key Role

- *Medical Assistant Shortage:* North Carolina’s Community Health Centers (CHCs) are facing a shortage of Medical Assistants, key frontline clinical support workers whose responsibilities enable physicians and other providers to maximize their time with patients. These shortages force providers to take on labor intensive administrative, clinical, and supportive tasks not supported by their training, thereby reducing the number of patients they can see, damaging provider morale, and increasing the likelihood of burnout.
- *Barriers to Workforce Entry:* The high cost of training programs can create barriers to entry into the field for those seeking to become Medical Assistants, especially for people from low-income and historically excluded populations.

Early Success with Medical Assistant Apprentice Initiative (MAAI) Pilot

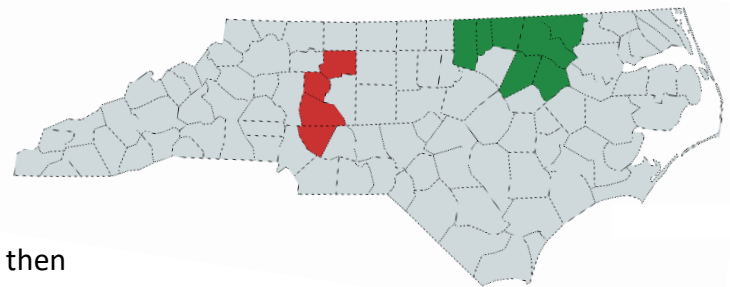
To address these shortages, the North Carolina Community Health Center Association launched a pilot of the Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Initiative (MAAI), a registered apprenticeship program with Apprenticeship NC, in 2022 with nine apprentices at two leading CHCs with sites in seven counties:

- [Rural Health Group](#) (Edgecombe, Granville, Halifax, Northampton, Vance, and Warren).
- [OIC Family Medical Center](#) (Edgecombe and Nash).

Apprentices in MAAI Are Paid and Earn While They Learn

Through this pilot, the MAAI has developed proof-of-concept of the program’s three core components:

- *Recruit:* NCCHCA and CHCs work together to recruit local student-apprentice jobseekers for placement in an entry level health care job.
- *Train:* The student apprentice obtains 900 hours of paid on-the-job learning at the CHC and online classroom instruction with all required expenses covered.
- *Certify, Hire, and Retain:* With their education and training complete, the apprentice is eligible to complete an industry-recognized certification to become a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) and then agrees to a minimum three-year commitment hire at a CHC.



Future MAAI Training Sites
Current MAAI Training Sites

MAAI: A Different Apprentice Experience

MAAI is different from other MA training programs in that it:

- Recruits from the community that the health center serves and aims to identify those from populations who may have barriers to entry into the workforce.
- Provides intensive support for apprentices, including dedicated mentoring and support to explore different health care roles available to MAs.
- Trains in the health center site. Providers and staff trained at a health center site are more likely to continue practice at the CHC or other safety net provider.
- Helps apprentices find career placement within the health center even in the event an apprentice does not complete the program.

North Carolina Community Health Center Association
Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Initiative (MAAI)

Request: Support Expansion of the Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program

NCCHCA seeks to expand the pilot by adding 50 apprentice placements at both existing health center training sites and at least three new participating CHCs in four counties: Cabarrus Rowan Community Health Center (Cabarrus and Rowan), Kintegra Health (Davidson), and United Health Centers (Forsyth).

After accounting for in-kind costs contributed by both NCCHCA and participating Community Health Centers, the remaining program costs amount to \$34,065 per student-apprentice. Therefore:

We humbly request a non-recurring appropriation of \$1,703,250 to support the costs of 50 new apprentice placements in Community Health Centers through the NC Community Health Center Association’s Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Initiative.

Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Initiative (MAAI) Expenses		Cost Per Apprentice
Contributions from NCCHCA	Recruitment & hiring costs	\$1,650
Contributions from CHC	Staff time for onsite training, oversight, and supervision	\$10,200
Additional Costs	Wages (\$15/hour* X 900 hours on-the job training and online education) *NCCHCA Apprentice Base Wage, may be increased by CHC in line with CHC structure and local wages.	\$13,500
	Benefits & Taxes	\$3,915
	Training Materials	\$5,750
	Mentor Time	\$6,000
	Clinical Liaison	\$4,900
	Total Cost per Student-Apprentice (includes wages and benefits)	\$45,915
	Total Contributed by NCCCHA/CHC per Student-Apprentice	\$11,850
Remaining Cost per Student-Apprentice After Contributions from NCCHCA & CHCs		\$34,065
Total NCCHCA & CHC Contributions for 50 Medical Assistant Student-Apprentice Placements		\$592,500
Total Financial Resources Requested for 50 Medical Assistant Student-Apprentice Placements		\$1,703,250
Total Costs for 50 Medical Assistant Student-Apprentice Placements		\$2,295,750

Sustainability and Growth

MAAI will have decreased operating costs as the program becomes more established. By 2025, the goal of NCCHCA is to absorb the full cost of the clinical liaison and mentor expenses and add in a placement fee to assist with sustainability, decreasing the amount of outside funding needed. Our goal is to increase the number of apprentices trained each year, with an increasing number of sites onboarded to serve as training locations.

About the North Carolina Community Health Center Association

NCCHCA is the state's primary care association representing North Carolina’s 43 Community Health Center (CHC) organizations that care for over 743,000 patients annually, without regard for patients’ ability to pay or insurance status. Our CHCs, also known as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), operate more than 400 clinical sites in rural and underserved communities in 85 counties throughout the state.