

## Aviation Career Education (ACE) Academy Grant Program

*Developing North Carolina's Aerospace Talent Pipeline*

### Program Overview

North Carolina's system of 72 public airports generates more than \$61 billion of economic impact each year – 10 percent of the state's GDP – and more than 373,000 jobs.

Public airports support a vibrant aerospace sector 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. North Carolina must inspire and develop a strong talent pipeline to sustain and grow this important sector.

**The Aviation Career Education (ACE) Academy Grant Program supports aerospace workforce development by providing grants of up to \$3,000 per academy for public airports that host aerospace and aviation career-focused summer academies for 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 grant program to inspire young people to explore and pursue the many rewarding careers available in the state's aerospace sector.

### Eligibility

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

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. The Division can provide information on organizations that have hosted ACE academies in the past.



### Grants

NCDOT Aviation allocates \$24,000 a year for this program.

### Use of Grant Funds

Grant 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. Grant funds may not be expended on administration or staffing.

### Academy Requirements

**Format.** ACE academies must host at least 30 middle and/or high school students. Preference will be given to airports serving students in lower-socio-economic areas, as determined by 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 North Carolina's legacy as "first in flight"
- Principles of flight
- Career discovery and planning (age appropriate)
- Exploring North Carolina post-secondary aviation education programs



- Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS, or drones), including uses, North Carolina operating regulations and permitting program, FAA's The Recreational UAS Safety Test (TRUST) program and North Carolina UAS educational offerings.

In addition, ACE academies must include a virtual or in-person presentation by the NCDOT Division of Aviation on "NCDOT Aviation Works for You."

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 North Carolina students can gain education and credentials through North Carolina 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

- **October:** Grant applications accepted
- **November:** Selection Committee reviews and scores applications
- **December:** Division notifies applicants of grant application determination
- **January:** 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 report these items within 30 days of the academy end date:

Post-academy synopsis of program, including:

- Dates, times and location
- Itinerary/schedule of activities
- Description (theme, curriculum focus)
- Number and demographic breakdown of participants (age, race, gender, county of residence)
- Newsworthy activity highlights or success stories suitable for call-out in the annual report
- 5-10 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 the 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 advertise their academies in future years and garner additional support such as sponsorships and partners.

### Questions?

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