

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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Contact: Renee Hoffman
Phone: 919/733-5612

**GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES THREE STATE PROGRAMS AMONG HARVARD'S TOP 50
GOVERNMENT INNOVATIONS FOR 2007**

*Learn & Earn, Community Care and Ecosystem Enhancement Programs are Semi-Finalists in
National Competition*

RALEIGH - Gov. Mike Easley today announced that three state government programs are among Harvard University's 2007 Top 50 Government Innovations. Two local government programs in North Carolina are also included in the top 50.

"I am proud that North Carolina is home to ground-breaking new ideas for how government can better serve the citizens," said Easley. "I am especially pleased that *Learn and Earn* is being recognized for helping students realize their dream of going to college."

Each year, the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government selects 50 of the nation's most innovative programs that link citizens with important public services. All Top 50 programs are semi-finalists for the Innovations in American Government Awards and are eligible to win one of seven \$100,000 grants.

The three state programs selected in the Top 50 are:

- Easley's *Learn and Earn* initiative offers students the opportunity to attend high school for five years and attain both a high school diploma and an associate's degree or two years of university credit at no cost.
- The state's Community Care program is a physician-led Medicaid-managed care program of local provider networks serving 745,000 patients. The networks improve quality and access to care while saving millions of dollars.
- The state's Ecosystem Enhancement Program proactively compensates for unavoidable environmental damage to North Carolina's wetlands and waterways. The initiative restores, enhances and protects natural resources and promotes responsible economic growth.

The two local government programs from North Carolina named in the Top 50 are:

- The city of High Point's Overt Drug Market Strategy is a law enforcement/community partnership that collapses drug markets, reducing violence by directly engaging dealers and their families, creating predictable sanctions and offering a range of services.

Governor's Press Office
State Capitol, Raleigh, NC 27603-8001
(919) 733-5612 - Toll Free 1-800-662-7005
FAX (919) 733-5166

- A self-directed tax by employers enables the staff of the Johnston County North Carolina Workforce Development Center to teach custom curriculums for specific employee skill enhancement.

The Top 50 programs represent government agencies at the federal, state, county and city levels and were selected for their novelty and creativity, effectiveness at addressing significant issues and their potential to be replicated by other jurisdictions. Chosen from nearly 1,000 applicants, the programs represent government's best efforts across a variety of policy areas, ranging from education to the environment, criminal justice to health care, and management to community development.

“Government agencies today must have the ability to respond efficiently to the ever-changing needs of citizens,” said Stephen Goldsmith, Director of the Innovations in American Government Program. “We are pleased to recognize these programs that have capitalized on creative thinking to increase the effectiveness of government.”

Eighteen finalists, selected from among the Top 50 programs, will be announced on May 2nd. The seven recipients of \$100,000 awards will be announced in the fall at a dinner celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Innovations in American Government Awards Program in Washington, D.C.

The Innovations in American Government Award is a program of the Roy Lila Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation. The Ash Institute advances excellence in governance and strengthens democratic institutions worldwide. To learn more, please visit www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu.

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