NC-SARA Quarterly April 2026; Announcements, Updates, News and More for SARA-Participating Institutions

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Announcements, Updates, News and More for SARA-Participating Institutions

Webinar Announcement - SARA Policy Developments for Participating Institutions and State Portal Entities (SPEs)

Registration is now open for a webinar on **Wednesday, May 27, 2026** from 11:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. MT to review recent and upcoming SARA policy changes, highlighting approved SARA Policy Modification Process (PMP) proposals from the 2024 and 2025 cycles, focusing on practical implementation for SARA-participating institutions and SARA State Portal Entities (SPEs). Timely information on SARA participation and upcoming developments will also be shared. Participants can pose questions live during the program.

The webinar will be recorded, and the slides along with the recording will be available on this webpage soon after the program date.

Register to Watch Live this Week! Public Forum - SARA Policy Modification Process 2026

Registration is now open for the SARA Public Forum as part of this year's cycle of the SARA Policy Modification process (PMP). The forum will be held **this Friday, April 24, 2026** from 10:00am to 12:00 PM Mountain Time.

During the forum individuals or organizations who have submitted proposals to modify *SARA Policy* will have the opportunity to present their proposal(s) publicly. Presenters will respond to questions submitted by viewers during the forum.

All SARA-participating institutions are encouraged to monitor the SARA PMP Portal for proposal developments throughout the cycle. You can find the full cycle calendar on the Participate - SARA Policy Modification Process webpage. Updates will be provided throughout the year about specific steps and key dates in the 2026 cycle. We look forward to your engagement in this important process!

Two New PMP Resources Now Available

The 8.2 Working Group, comprised of key stakeholders in the SARA Policy Modification Process (PMP), created two support documents in collaboration with the SARA Policy Implementation Team. You can now access overviews of the SARA PMP process in both a table and a workflow narrative format on the Participate - SARA Policy Modification Process webpage.

SARA and Workforce Pell Statement

Does SARA cover Workforce Pell Eligible Programs?
The proposed rules for Workforce Pell programs strictly prohibit broad, nationwide, or multilateral reciprocity agreements for distance education. Instead, the U.S. Department of Education proposes allowing bilateral agreements that are made exclusively between the Governors of two specific states. This would be an option for states providing distance education.

The Bottom Line: SARA remains an option for institutional authorization of distance education, but approval for Workforce Pell participation requires a separate, state-to-state process.

Rationale
Because Workforce Pell requires programs to prepare students for high-wage, high-skill, or in-demand jobs, a program that meets the specific labor market needs of an institution's home state may not meet the economic needs of the state where a distance education student lives or works. Under the proposed rules, for a student to use Workforce Pell for a distance education program located in another state, the governors of both states must establish a publicly published bilateral agreement that likely will need to meet the following conditions:

> **Validation of Local Demand**: The governor of the state where the student is located (in consultation with their state Workforce Board) would include the program's target occupation or sector on their state's list of high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand jobs.
>
> **Home State Approval**: The governor of the state where the institution is located would confirm that the program meets all standard statutory conditions and quality requirements to be an eligible workforce program.
>
> **Data-Sharing Protocols**: Because institutions must meet strict completion and job placement metrics, the agreement would include provisions for sharing data between the two states to accurately calculate and verify these outcomes.

Workforce Pell includes polices that apply to students enrolling across state lines via distance education. The requirement for a bilateral agreement does not apply to an individual who resides in one state but travels across state lines to attend an eligible workforce program in person.

Furthermore, while SARA provides broad institutional authorization, it does not extend to specific programmatic requirements. In contrast, Workforce Pell agreements are strictly program specific. Consequently, these programs require a targeted, independent approval process.

We are closely monitoring these regulatory developments and will provide further updates as additional information becomes available.

2026 NC-SARA Data Reporting

It's almost time for the SARA annual data collection/reporting. The SARA data reporting window is May 15 – June 15. There are no changes to the data reporting process this year. Find the templates to use and verify that your data reporting contacts have access to the portal via the NC-SARA website.

NC-SARA Data Collection Expansion - Request for Feedback

Both states and institutions have increasingly asked NC-SARA to collect additional information. Given these requests, NC-SARA is considering expanding its data collection. To learn more and provide feedback to guide NC-SARA's decision making process, please take our survey. Feel free to also share with others on your campus (Institutional Research staff, for example). For any questions, please contact data@nc-sara.org.

Strategic Plan Website

NC-SARA is currently in the process of developing it's strategic plan for 2027-2031. We have recently launched a website providing updates on the process, including feedback from stakeholder surveys conducted in summer of 2025. To learn more about the NC-SARA strategic plan, please visit the NC-SARA website.

State & Federal Developments

NC-SARA will continue to monitor policies impacting state authorization at the state and federal level, communicating with states and institutions via emails and webinars. If you have any questions, please contact your SARA State Portal Entity staff.

2026 Calendar of Important SARA Dates

A new page of the NC-SARA website was created so you can easily find key important dates, many of which are pertinent to an institution's SARA participation. Look for updates moving forward.

Missed a previous newsletter?

NC-SARA will be posting previous versions of this quarterly newsletter on the SARA Learning Station webpage (scroll to the bottom of the page for past issues).

SARA Learning Station

The SARA Learning Station is your one-stop shop to access NC-SARA's resources for learning about SARA, including quick-start guides, SARA 101, and other online courses for those who are new and experienced with SARA. Learning resources for institutions have been developed in collaboration with our regional compact partners and SARA SPEs. Institutions should always check with their SARA SPE for any state-specific requirements.

NC-SARA Webinars

While we would love for you to join our webinars live, if your schedule doesn't

allow it or if you want to revisit any portion of these programs, please look for the recording and slides to be posted on our Webinars webpage soon after each program date.

SARA State Portal Entity (SPE)

You can find the current contact information for your state's SARA SPE(s) on our SPE Contacts webpage.

SARA-Participating Institutions

You can find all actively-participating SARA institutions in each SARA member state and territory at any given time in the SARA-Participating Institution Directory.

We welcome your thoughts, ideas, and questions.
Thank you for reading!

NC SARA

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