

ANIMATION CAREER & PORTFOLIO GUIDE

Navigating North Carolina's Animation, Gaming & Motion Design Industry

North Carolina has quietly grown into a major East Coast hub for animation, game development, and commercial motion design. From Cary's world-leading game studios to Raleigh and Charlotte's creative agencies and RTP's scientific visualization sectors, opportunities are rich for artists with tailored demo reels.

1. The 3 Primary Animation Hubs in NC

AAA Gaming & Real-Time

Key Hub: Cary / Raleigh

Anchored by global heavyweights like **Epic Games** (Unreal Engine) and **Ubisoft Red Storm**. Needs gameplay animators, 3D technical animators, and rigging specialists.

Commercial Motion Design

Key Hub: Raleigh & Charlotte

Driven by top studios like **Dash Studio** (Raleigh), **Fortitude Creative** (Charlotte), and regional ad agencies. Focuses on 2D/3D brand animation, broadcast, and sports visuals.

Scientific & Enterprise Viz

Key Hub: Research Triangle Park

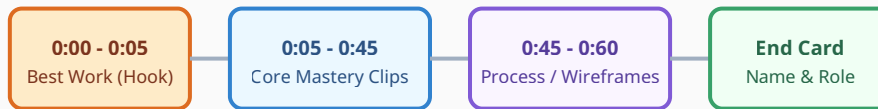
Biotech, pharma, and medical tech firms require 3D animators to illustrate complex cellular processes, medical devices, and architectural projects.

2. Building an NC-Tailored Demo Reel

Your demo reel is 90% of your job application. Studios in NC review dozens of reels weekly; follow these rules to stand out immediately:

Target Industry	Reel Focus & Content	Tools NC Studios Expect
Game Animation Cary / RTP	Weight, mechanics, idle loops, combat locomotion, and hit reactions. Show body mechanics over acting.	Unreal Engine , Maya, Blender, Motion Capture cleanup.
Motion Graphics Charlotte / Raleigh	Snappy transitions, kinetic typography, 3D product renders, stylized 2D character animation.	Cinema 4D , After Effects, Blender, Octane/Redshift.

3. Answering the "Reel Structure" Formula



Do's for NC Animation Reels

- Keep it under **60 seconds** (90s max for senior leads).
- Put your best shot in the first 5 seconds.
- Include a PDF **Breakdown Sheet** detailing your specific contribution to every clip.
- Show real-time implementation if applying in Cary/RTP game studios.

Don'ts to Avoid

- Don't include filler or weak work just to stretch the reel duration.
- Don't use copyrighted music if publishing publicly on Vimeo/YouTube without license.
- Don't hide your role—be explicit if you did rigging, animation, or lighting.

4. Networking & Getting Hired in NC

Local Communities & Events

- **Triangle Game Developers:** Active community meeting regularly in Raleigh/Durham/Cary.
- **NC SIGGRAPH Chapter / Local Meetups:** Excellent venue for 3D, VFX, and technical artists.
- **AIGA North Carolina:** Chapters in Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham focus on motion graphic design and digital media.
- **ECGC (East Coast Game Conference):** Held annually in Raleigh, one of the premier networking hubs for game animators on the East Coast.

Pro Tip: Due to Epic Games' massive influence in Cary, demonstrating proficiency in **Unreal Engine (Sequencer & Control Rig)** gives you a significant advantage in North Carolina's job market.