



UPPER COASTAL PLAIN

COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



ANNUAL

REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2022 - 2023

Serving Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton and Wilson Counties Since 1971

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



I am pleased to present our Fiscal year 2022- 2023 Annual Report for Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (UCPCOG). This report contains valuable information about the many services and programs delivered in this region.

Fiscal Year 2022- 2023 has been another outstanding year of achievements and accomplishments. The UCPCOG Board of Directors have been engaged in setting the direction for the agency and working to promote regional collaboration and cooperation to address aging, economic development, infrastructure, and workforce development priorities.

The accomplishments of the Region during the last year are due in large part to the hard work of our staff. Superbly lead by our Executive Director, Robert Hiatt, the departmental staffs of Workforce Development, Area Agency on Aging, Planning and Development Services, Finance and General Administration have done an outstanding job. The UCPCOG won three national excellence awards for work in the Planning and Workforce Development departments, and for coordinating and implementing the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Several new initiatives have gotten underway that will improve the region's recovery and resiliency portfolio.

The UCPCOG provided services to more than 10,000 area citizens and played a large role in regional food security by funding more than 147,000+ meals to older adults. New grant awards were more than \$47 million, and there were 72 planning projects underway during Fiscal Year 2022- 2023. In addition, the Planning and Development Services Department administered approximately \$92+ million dollars of infrastructure grants on behalf of member governments in the region. The Workforce Development Department provided support to 226 businesses in the region, supported more than 137 work-based learning opportunities, and provided over 100,000+ workforce services to citizens and employers.

The UCPCOG will continue to look for new ways to improve its services, and to develop beneficial partnerships with private, public and non-profit sector organizations in the region. The UCPCOG will support the local and regional priorities of its member governments and continue to work on vital programs and projects that improve regional prosperity.

I am honored to serve as Chairman of the UCPCOG Board, and I look forward to working with our local governments and staff over the next fiscal year. We will continue to work on those areas where we can improve our value for our member governments and deliver critical services and programs to citizens within the region. Please join me in celebrating our 52nd year of service to the citizens of our region, and a successful year ahead.

Bobbie D. Jones,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobbie D. Jones".

Chairman

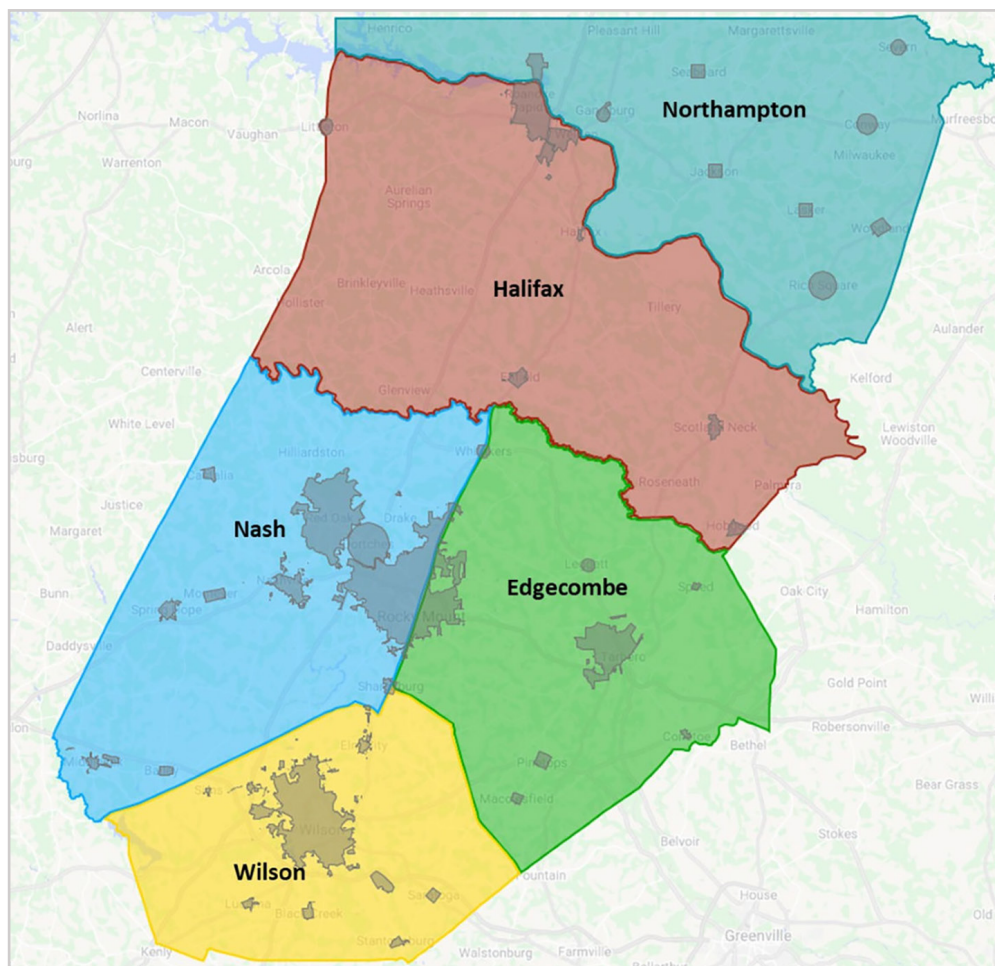
UCPCOG Board of Directors

MISSION STATEMENT:

"The UCPCOG, which consists of the municipal and county governments of Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton and Wilson Counties, is committed to successful regionalization; therefore, we plan, administer, and deliver quality state and federal programs and services for the benefit of our citizens."

VISION STATEMENT:

"The vision of the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments region which consists of Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton and Wilson Counties and its municipalities is that all its citizens enjoy healthy, happy and productive lives for themselves and their families."

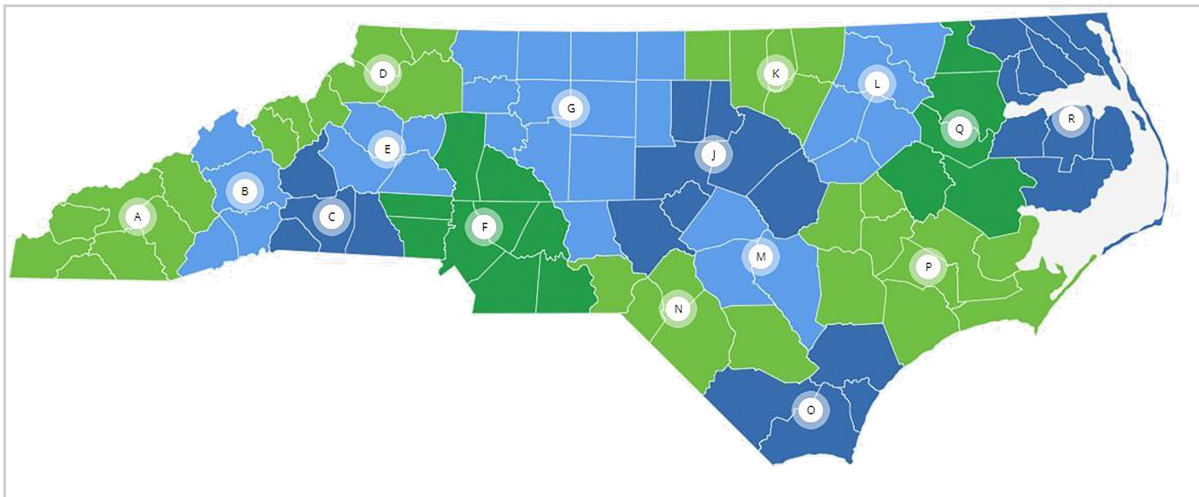


UCPCOG REGION MAP

The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments is one of sixteen multi-county planning and development regions in the State. Regional Councils are governed by local public and private sector officials. The councils are funded in part by the member local governments. These Councils are forums where local officials determine priorities for the larger area of which their communities are integral parts.

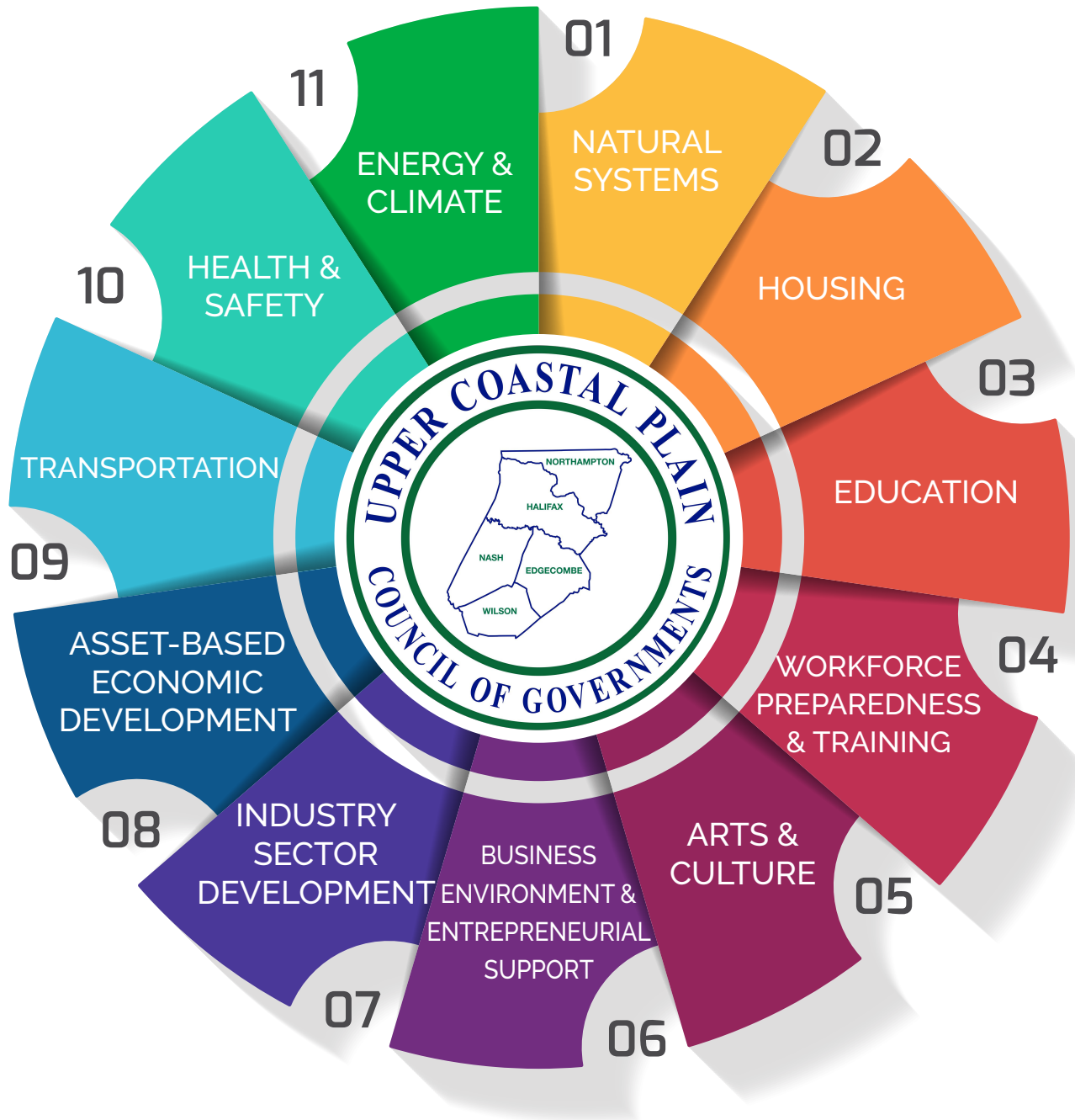
Regional Councils provide a wide variety of services and programs including economic and community development assistance, job training, aging services, data and information, fiscal management, facilitation, and strategic planning. The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (State Planning Region L) encompasses 2,707 square miles, a region population of 288,747 persons according to the 2020 Census.

Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments is comprised of county governments and local municipalities in Wilson, Nash, Edgecombe, Halifax and Northampton Counties. The Board of Directors include one elected official from each member government and three non-elected members from each county. The Board is responsible for establishing policy and providing direction and guidance to the staff. The Board meets bi-monthly to consider items of importance to the regional community.



NORTH CAROLINA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS

The UCPCOG works with a wide variety of partner organizations to coordinate aging, planning and community development, and workforce services throughout the five county region. Regional coordination and cooperation ensures that services are successfully delivered, and creates opportunities to leverage new funds for member governments.



Every \$1 in local government dues returned \$265 in state or federal funds to the region!



10,000+ Citizens Served



137 Entered WorkBased Learning



147,644 Senior Meals Served



100,832 Workforce Services Provided
226 Businesses Directly Supported



19,101 Transportation Trips



50+ Information Workshops



72 Planning Projects



Administering \$92+ Million in Projects



\$47.3 Million in Grant and Funding Awards

UCPCOG REGIONAL IMPACT FY 2022-2023

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION STAFF



Robert Hiatt,
Executive Director



Kelly Skinner,
Executive Assistant

TURNING POINT

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

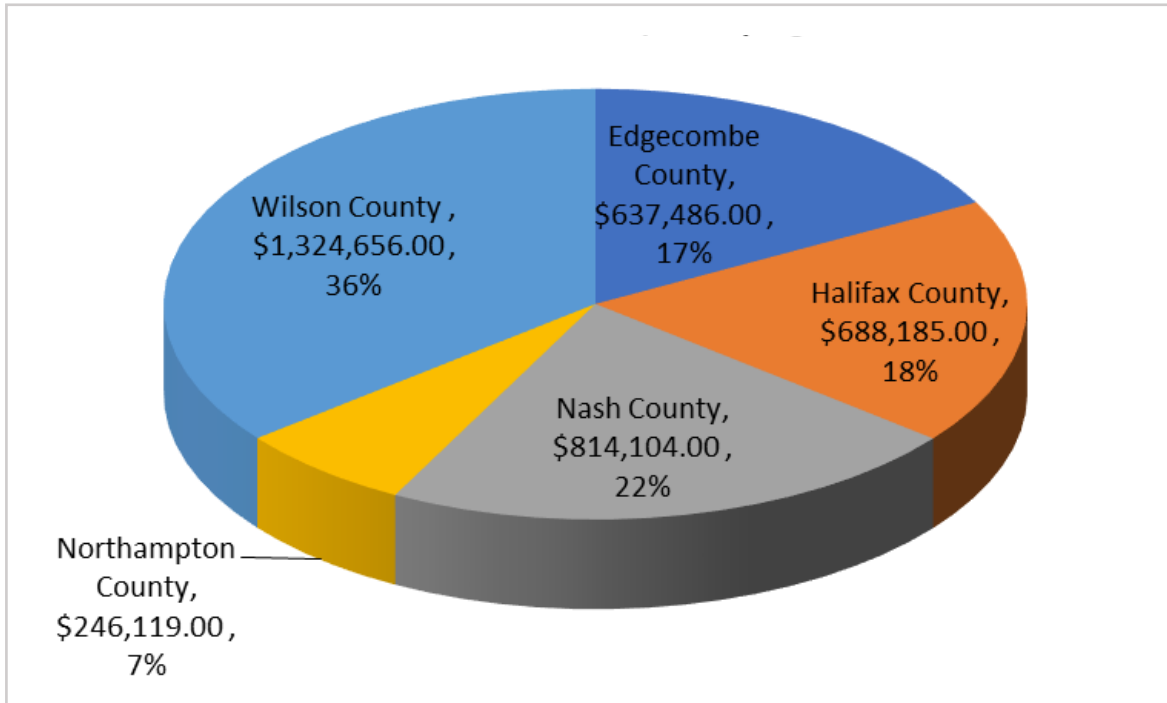
Turning Point W/WDB programs train citizens for high demand careers within our region, and works with area businesses to develop a talent pipeline. Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments administers the program, and Turning Point Workforce Development Board provides program oversight.

The role of the Turning Point Workforce Development Board is to:

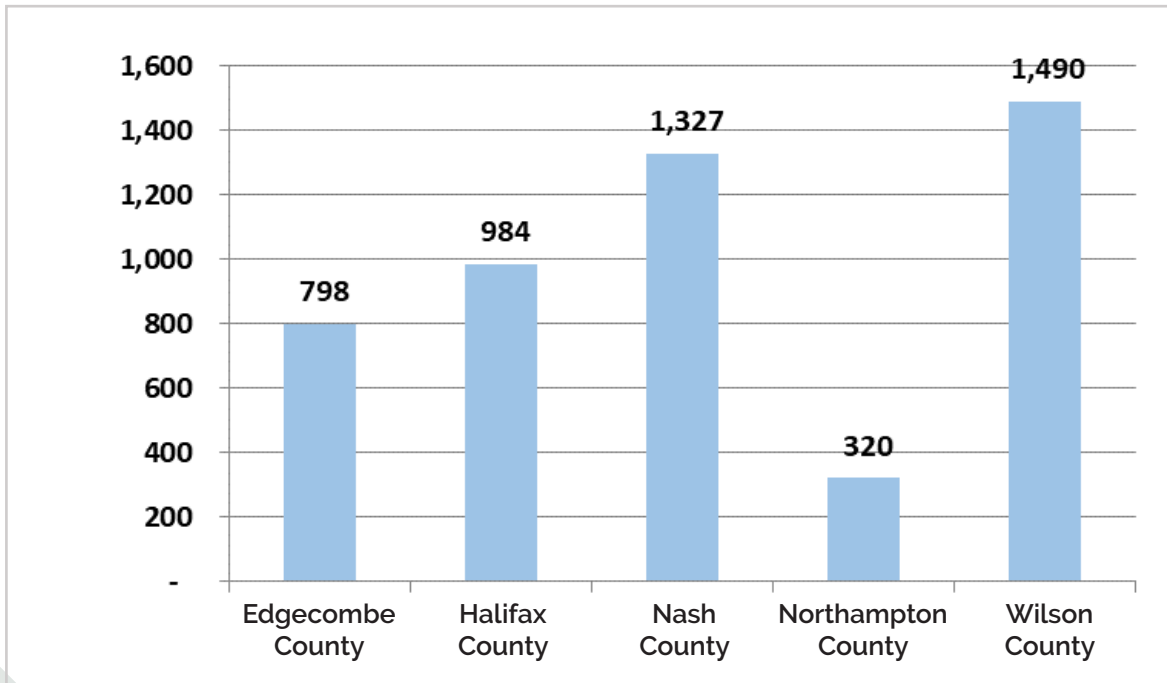
- Be the convener of conversation and center of community/regional leadership to identify workforce challenges;
- Work in collaborative partnership with key stakeholders, (especially economic development and education);
- Bring resources to assist in resolving workforce challenges; and
- Act as the accountability agent to ensure the work is completed.

Turning Point WDB utilizes tools such as NCWorks.gov online and Labor/Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) data to annually approve the region's high demand skill occupations. As a result, 4,655 Adults/Dislocated Worker citizens were served and 82.3% entered employment. The Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) system average median earnings outcome is \$5,629. Turning Point NextGen enrolled 234 in the youth programs funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in which 77.0% entered employment (subsidized/unsubsidized), 82.8% retained employment through the 4th quarter after exit, 25 entered Post-Secondary Education and 67 received their High School Diploma/GED.

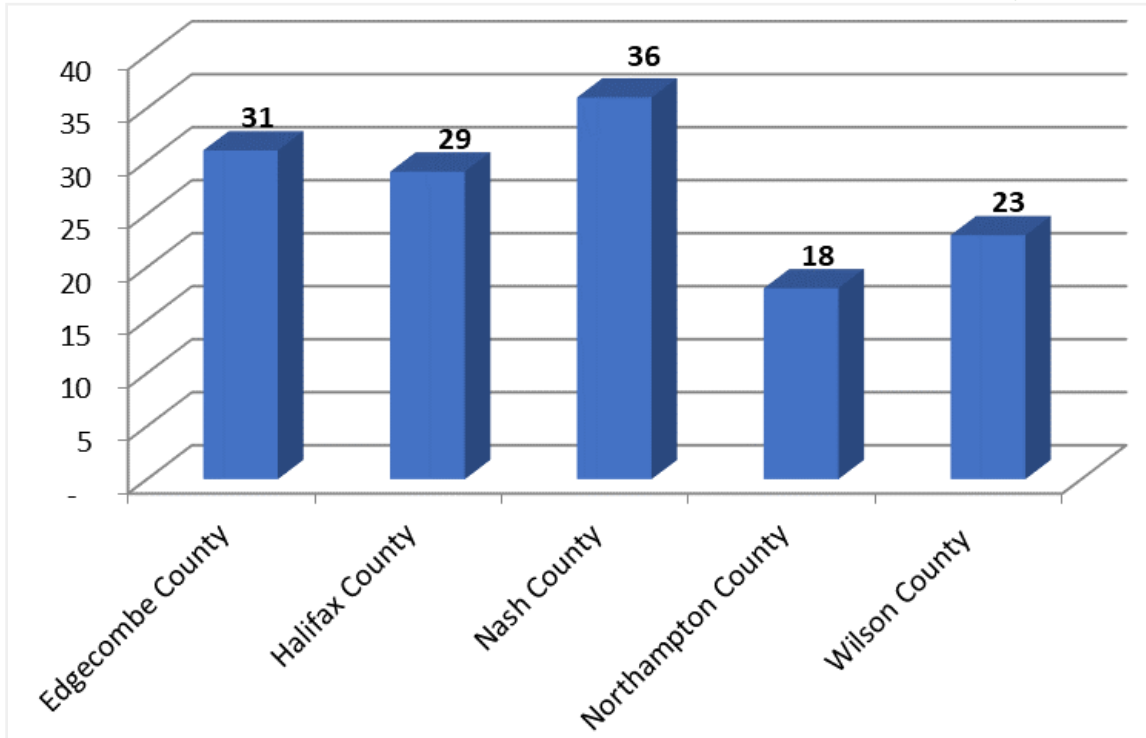
FY22-23 Expenditures by County



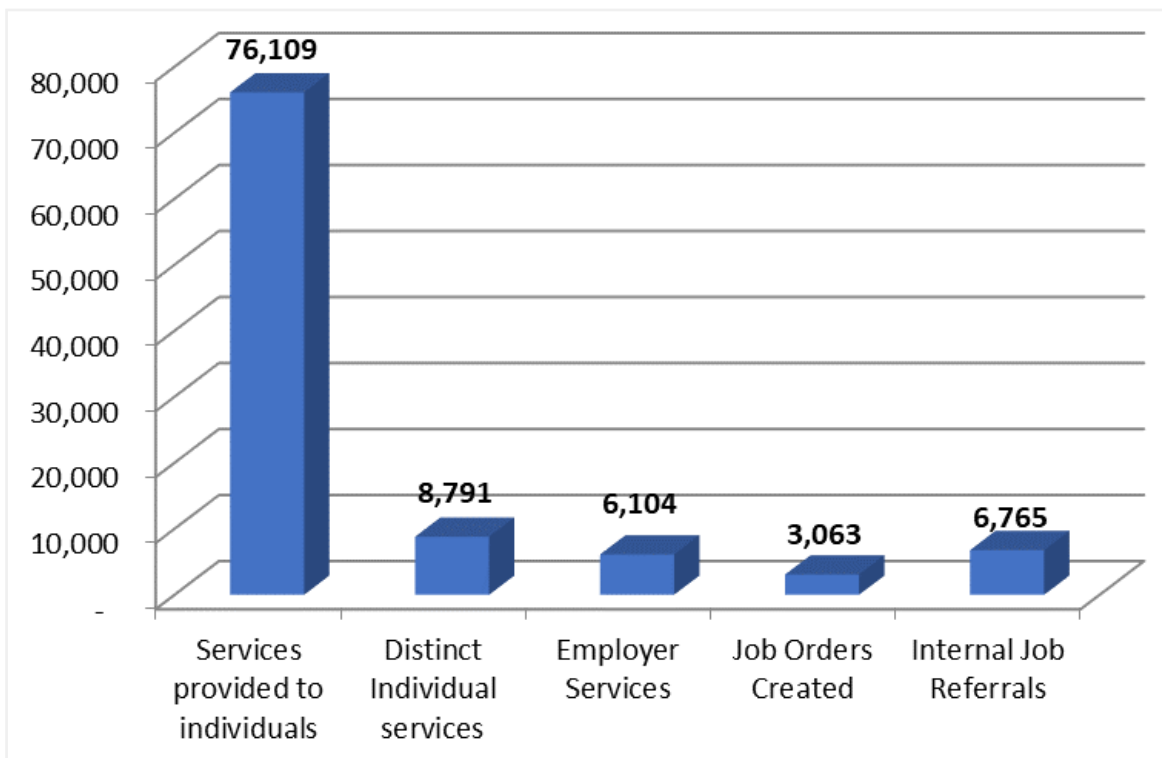
Program Services Provided



Work-Based Learning by County



Program Services Provided



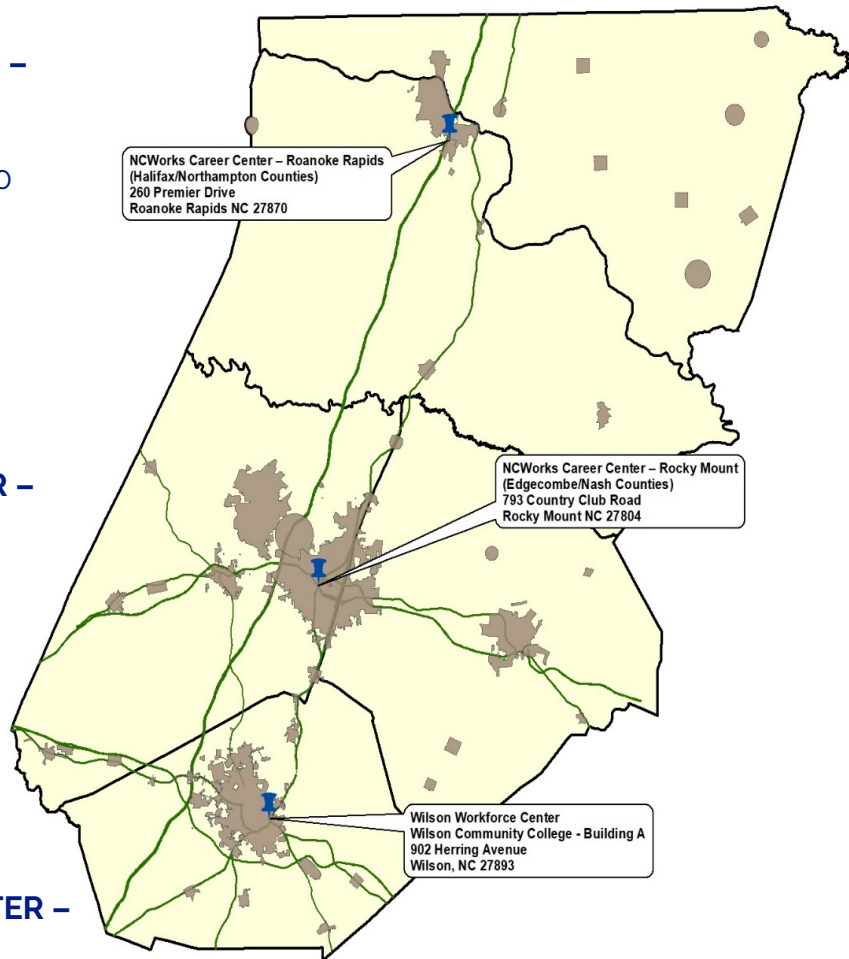


A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenter® network

NCWORKS CAREER CENTER – ROANOKE RAPIDS
406 PREMIER BLVD.
ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC 27870
(252) 537-4188

NC WORKS CAREER CENTER – ROCKY MOUNT
793 COUNTRY CLUB ROAD
ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804
(252) 977-3306

WILSON WORKFORCE CENTER – WILSON
WILSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE - BLDG. A
902 HERRING AVE.
WILSON, NC 27893
(252) 281-6387



Workforce Development At its Finest

Cassandra Speight

Did you know local counties recently received funds to assist individuals who have been dislocated from employment? The grant received was called the National Dislocated Workers Grant (NDWG).

This was important for one very special young lady from Wilson County by the name of Casandra Speight. At the Wilson Workforce Center the needs of each customer always come first, and Casandra was no different. Earlier this year (2022) there was an unfortunate fire at a QVC Hub in Edgecombe County North Carolina which dislocated hundreds of workers, Mrs. Speight being one of them. She quickly expressed her concerns to the Wilson Workforce Center about how eager she was to return to the workforce despite the setback of the fire.

They understood that Casandra was dislocated but not defeated. Realizing her passion to succeed and determination to win, they quickly explained the NDWG to her and had the Career Advisor walk her through the process seamlessly.

Once intake was complete, the Career Advisor assisted Casandra in identifying a chosen Career Pathway and strategically planned and developed clear Goals and Objectives. She was empathetically encouraged and reminded that the developed pathway would ensure attainable goals and a positive outcome. It is imperative that each office show all Clients, Customers, and Co-workers empathy in order to see them succeed and be a successful part of their journey.

Casandra started her Occupational Skills Training at A2Z Trucking Academy on June 28, 2022 and she successfully completed it on August 11, 2022. Not soon after, she interviewed and gained full-time employment at S.T. Wooten Corporation as a CDL Class A Driver, where she remains self-sufficient and provides for herself and her family. We are all Proud of you!



WILSON WORKFORCE CENTER
WILSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE,
WILSON, NC 27893



TURNING POINT WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD



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UPPER COASTAL PLAIN
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Workforce Development At its Finest

Teneisha
Roberts

••• **Teneisha Roberts**

Teneisha Roberts enrolled in the WIOA Adult program in July of 2021. She was accepted into the RN program at Halifax Community College and started classes the following month. Mrs. Roberts already had a degree in medical laboratory technology and had worked in the medical field for several years. Registered nursing was a suitable and natural progression for her.

Two-year degrees are major commitments especially with the clinical components that come along with nursing degrees, but Mrs. Roberts was a star student. Her grades were always up to par and she met every expectation asked of her, both for her academic program and the WIOA program. Following her graduation in May of 2023, Mrs. Roberts accepted a position as a Registered Nurse with ECU Health. WIOA and our partners are so proud of Mrs. Roberts and her accomplishments; she earned them with hard work and determination, and we are happy to have been a resource in her journey to get there.



The Power of Collaboration

TURNING POINT
Workforce Development Board



One Region — One Workforce

TURNING POINT WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD



HALIFAX
Community College

LEARNING COMES TO LIFE IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

HALIFAX COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

NC
works

NCWORKS OF
HALIFAX/NORTHAMPTON



UPPER COASTAL PLAIN
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Turning Point Workforce Development Health Care Collaborative

In 2021, a team of health care employers representing a cross-section of industry came together and launched a partnership designed to foster greater collaboration and strengthen the competitiveness of the health care sector in the Turning Point Workforce Development Board's (TPWDB) region. The launch meeting resulted in the formation of three workgroups organized around priorities that health care employers agreed will strengthen the competitiveness of the sector. The partnership has determined to meet bi-monthly with 26 business partners and 21 public partners. Turning Point Workforce Development Board provides the facilitator, administrator, and our TPWDB Director has presented to the collaborative on TPWDB's many offerings. Our TPWDB Business Support team are members as well.

The group generally meets virtually. Area L AHEC has been instrumental in helping the group succeed, by actively providing leadership and participating in the work groups, providing meeting space for our attempt at a hybrid meeting, and educating the group on the many opportunities they provide, like podcasts on burnout and a conference to address some of the same issues.

This is a picture from our latest Zoom meeting with Avant Health Care presenting solutions for staff shortages. Another meeting topic included the Upper Coastal Plain Learning Council membership sharing with the HCAC team on issues higher education has in providing healthcare education. This presentation led to both groups meeting again to determine ways to work together on these issues. Guest speakers have presented on topics like trauma's effect on healthcare workers and a summary of the surgeon General's report on burnout.



Business Services: Highlight-Reentry

Client "Shawn" of the Turning Point Region was released from incarceration late 2022 in Turning Point Region and began residing in a shelter in Nash County for transitional housing. The client's father contacted the Turning Point Business Services Manager early on, seeking to discuss the steps he should take as he felt his son should not go to seek referrals for jobs yet, but needed to obtain the appropriate documents, license, and any other necessary protocol for his situation. The client's father was residing in Florida and visiting North Carolina to assist and support his son. The Business Services Manager discussed this situation with the individual, mentioning that an Engagement Coordinator is also on the team that works with Reentry and provides input on a Council as well. The Manager brought the Coordinator up to date on the assistance needed and to discuss a plan to have employers on board that will provide assistance to Reentry and Second Chance clients in an effort to transition him into employment once he took the necessary steps to obtain all proper documents, etc. The contacts remained positive, staying in contact, even emailed notes of "thank you" along the way, as they worked to have proper ID, licenses, steps etc.

Staff remained in touch with the client and father to be sure they had followed the recommendations. The Business Engagement Coordinator even provided a mock interview to the client to be sure he felt ready to meet management and discuss options as he was transitioning into full time work outside of the system; and as he resided in transitional housing he did not feel comfortable going into a Center to work on a resume, therefore they wanted to know could the Board team remain in touch as they worked through these processes. This client was released from incarceration and within 2 months, obtained employment with a company in Edgecombe County. The employer HR Manager has continued to be pleased with the work ethic of this customer thus far and has thanked the Business Services and Engagement team for continued assistance to this population as with all others, to provide assistance with resources, connections and employer engagement to make the transition easier for the individual, but also allowing employers the opportunity to know of the skills and abilities of this new jobseeker. The ongoing relationships with employers, contact with customers at their request, proper referral and continued efforts with Reentry made this success possible.

Business Services: Highlight-Rapid Response

During the program year, the Business Services team led Rapid Responses that included over 300 dislocated workers as a result of permanent closings in Nash and Wilson Counties. The Business Services Manager provided information to headquarters and HR Management for employers allowing them to make the necessary decisions to provide employees with the resources they would need. The team was assembled to provide assistance during employee sessions off site over a period of weeks. Numerous dislocated workers have been provided career services (to include a training or schooling) in the Local Area, working through Career Centers, while many have become employed elsewhere. Over 150 of these have been provided some services to include employment thus far. Others are able to utilize Unemployment Insurance and Employer packages and have enrolled in courses; while others have opted for retirement. An Employer in Edgecombe County made the highest number of offers from a Job Fair to allow workers the opportunity to become employed. These efforts were successful in transitioning numerous dislocated workers to employment or other career services, with a good relationship between an employer and Board staff to assemble sessions working along side corporate teams, Local HR teams and the Rapid Response team.

TURNING POINT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STAFF



Amy Brown



**Michael Williams,
TPWD Director**



Duna Dickinson Long



Brian Atkinson



Susan Phipps



Carisa Rudd



Rose Motley-Sumner



Frince Williams

AREA AGENCY ON AGING



The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is an organization working within a federal mandate to inform, advocate and plan for community services on behalf of older adults and caregivers. The agency is part of the National Network set in place by the Older Americans Act of 1965. There are 622 AAAs in the US, and 16 in North Carolina. The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments covers Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and Wilson counties.

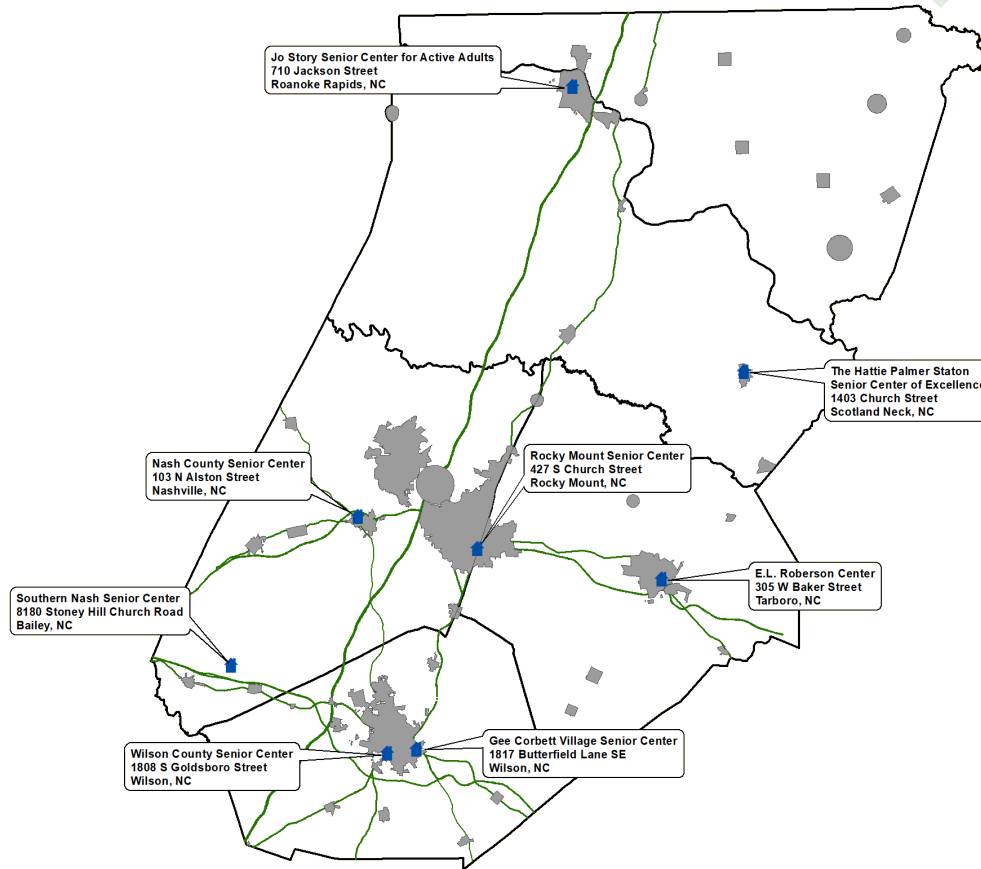
The Area Agency on Aging provides funding or direct services for the following activities:

- Senior Center Operations
- Adult Day Care
- Transportation
- Information & Options Counseling (I&OC)
- Community Education
- Long Term Care Ombudsman
- Home Delivered Meals
- Legal Services
- In-Home Aide/Respite
- Information/Options Counseling
- Evidence Based Health Promotion
- Advocacy for Disabled & Older Adults and their caregivers



MARY MARLIN
Aging Program Director
252-234-5956

FUNDED SENIOR CENTERS



Edgecombe E. L. Roberson Center
305 W. Baker St.
Tarboro, NC 27886-0220
Telephone: (292) 641-4263

Nash The Southern Nash Senior Center
8180 Stoney Hill Church Rd.
Bailey, NC 27807
Telephone: (292) 235-4303

Halifax Jo Story Senior Center for Active Adults
701 Jackson Street
Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870
Telephone: (252) 533-2849

Nash Rocky Mount Senior Center
427 S. Church Street
Rocky Mount, NC 27802
Telephone: (252) 972-1152

Halifax Hattie Palmer Staton Senior Center
1403 Church Street
Scotland Neck, NC 27874
Telephone: (252) 826-3891

Wilson Wilson County Senior Center
1808 Goldsboro St. S.
Wilson, NC 27893
Telephone: (252) 206-4059

Nash Nash County Senior Center
103 N. Alston St.
Nashville, NC 27856
Telephone: (252) 459-1375

Wilson Gee Corbett Village Senior Center
1817 Butterfield Lane
Wilson, NC 27893
Telephone: (252) 243-4855

FAMILY CAREGIVER



Ashleigh Glover and Rebecca Stapleton completed their training as Powerful Tools for Caregivers (PT4C) Leaders and scheduled a workshop right away. PT4C is a six-week, 2.5-hour workshop designed to educate caregivers on reducing stress, enhancing self-confidence, improving communication of their emotions, achieving a balanced life, increasing their ability to make challenging decisions, and identifying valuable resources.

This exciting tool for caregivers was reintroduced in the region when the much-anticipated PT4C workshop took place at Braswell Memorial Library in Rocky Mount every Thursday from May 4th to June 8th, 2023. There was a fantastic group of 9 caregivers in attendance who gained a wealth of knowledge and developed a better understanding of self-care; with 7 successfully completing at least 4 out of the 6 PT4C sessions. We look forward to providing this new offering to many more caregivers across the region!



OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM



Advocacy General Info
(AGIs) 482

Facility Visits
166

Complaint Investigations
46

Closed Cases
33

Wisdom

Older adults possess a wealth of knowledge,
wisdom and grace that only age defines.

With each passing year, a story is told,
Of challenges faced and journeys that did unfold.

Through the trials and obstacles overcome,
They've shown resilience that can't be undone.
Their secret keys are adaptability, resilience, and patience;
Patience, a virtue from which treasures are spun.

Generations blend as understanding grows,
Appreciating differences that arose.

Older adults are to be a treasured indeed,
Their contributions are gifts we all need!

Contributed by:

ANETTA BROWN
LTC Ombudsman



COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)



TYRONDA WHITAKER
LTC Ombudsman

Have you ever had a feeling that you couldn't quite explain. You know the type of feeling that nags you, reminds you that it's there but you can't quite wrap your mind around what it is. The feeling is so deeply embedded that it becomes a part of you. The feeling is essential to your survival. It drives and motivates you. It keeps you grounded. Poof, like magic, the feeling disappears one day. You begin to miss it and recognize the true value that it contributed to the essence of who you are. The "feeling" is representative of volunteers in the long-term care program. Volunteers help to ensure long term residents have someone to advocate for them and the impact is detrimental when no volunteer is available.

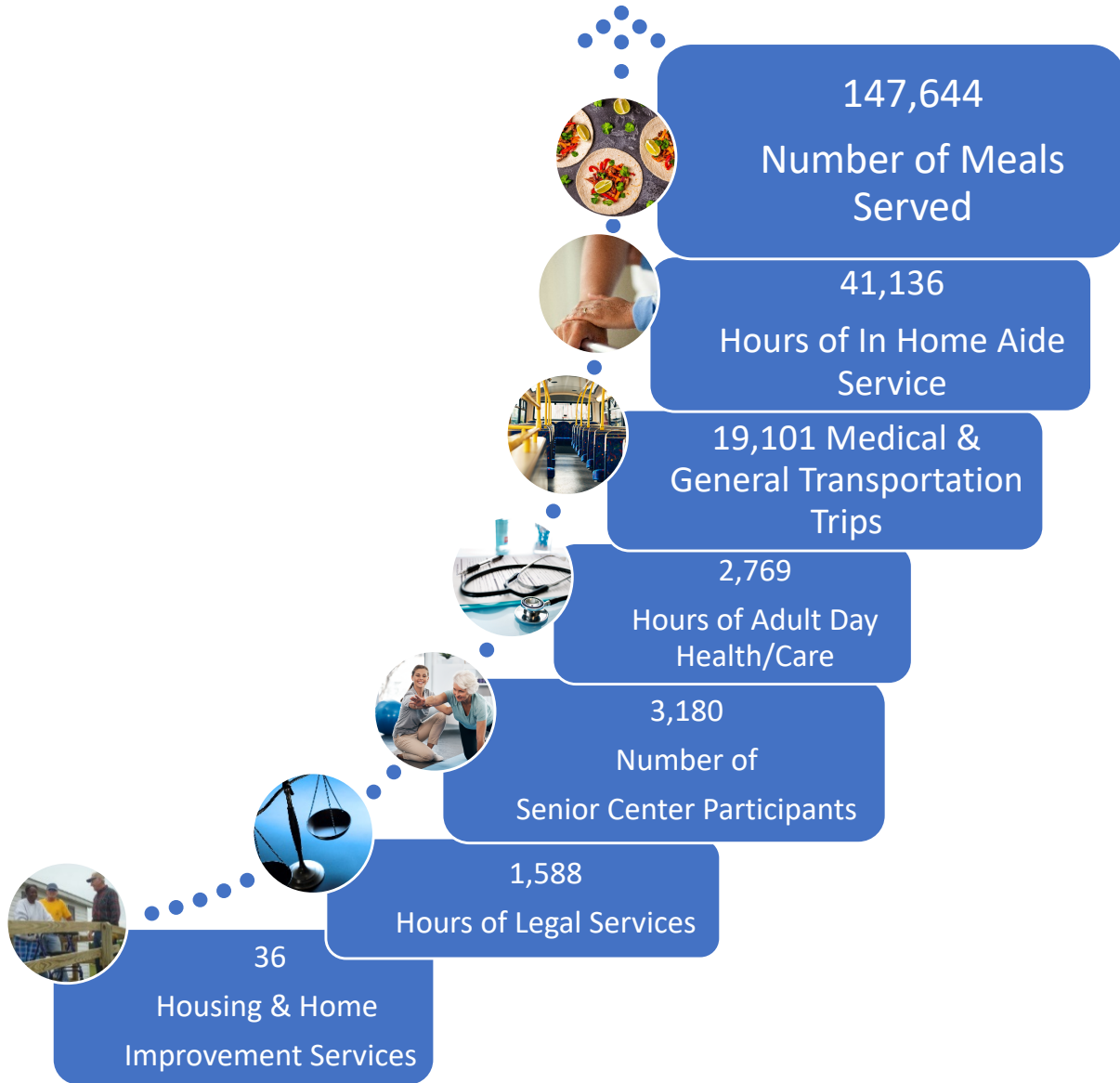
Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members are volunteer ombudsman. CAC members are the heart and soul of the ombudsman program. In Region L, there are over 4,000 long term care beds and two paid ombudsmen. While our paid staff put forth a valiant effort, CAC members are there to assist with resident's rights, complaints, advocacy, or friendly visits for residents. Our Ombudsmen are as successful as they are because of CAC volunteers.

As of 2019, the region had 56 CAC volunteers. Regrettably, we ended fiscal year 2023 with only 23 volunteers. Multiple factors can be attributed to the decrease in volunteers with the greatest being the COVID-19 pandemic. CAC members were not allowed to visit facilities for over two years during the height of the pandemic. The average age of CAC volunteers in the region is 67. Some volunteers have simply aged out, have illnesses, become long-term care residents themselves, or passed away. There is a huge void in the program and our ombudsmen are in dire need of volunteers.

The ombudsman program is actively seeking volunteers. Volunteers are trained, certified, and designated by the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services. The final step is appointment to the committee by County Commissioners. CAC members meet at least once a quarter and visit residents in facilities. They work with the ombudsmen and facility staff to ensure the residents' voice is heard, rights are upheld, and he or she receives the services they are entitled to.

For those interested in making a lasting difference as a CAC volunteer or seeking more information, please reach out to Ty Whitaker at 252.234.5963 or Annetta Brown at 252.234.5962.

HOME & COMMUNITY CARE BLOCK GRANT



MICHAEL STANFORD
Transportation
Aging Program Specialist

OTHER AAA PROGRAMS & NEW INITIATIVES



CONSUMER DIRECTED SERVICES: HALIFAX COUNTY



DAWN TILLERY
Aging Program Specialist

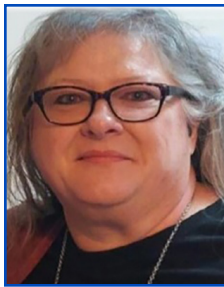
On October 1, 2022, Dawn Tillery transitioned from her role as COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Coordinator to become an Aging Program Specialist, coinciding with the launch of the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) Program. This innovative program was initiated to extend home care services to Halifax and Nash Counties, aiming to empower individuals aged 60 and above to continue living in their homes while preserving their independence.

The CDS program is distinctive in its person-centered approach, allowing recipients to choose a friend or family member to deliver the necessary assistance, promoting a sense of comfort and personal connection. Since the program's inception, it has commenced services for eight clients, with an additional five onboarding soon.

The impact of the CDS program in Halifax County has been profound and transformative. One of our clients, who had been on the Chore waiting list for about five years, has notably benefited. The client's daughter, who had been her primary caregiver, was compelled to quit her job due to scheduling conflicts arising while caring for her mother. Despite her willingness, program guidelines previously prohibited her from serving as her mother's Personal Aide.

Thankfully, the CDS program has remedied this situation, not only enabling the daughter to formally care for her mother but also providing her with a source of income, which was lost when she had to leave her employment. Both mother and daughter have expressed immense gratitude for the program, wishing it had been implemented years earlier, as it has brought about only positive changes in their lives.

USAGING FLU & COVID VACCINE OUTREACH



CORA SCARBOROUGH
Aging Program Specialist

Cora Scarborough joined the AAA team as an Aging Program Assistant in 2023 and will transition to the position of Aging Program Specialist on July 1, 2023, to oversee the Flu & COVID Vaccine Outreach Program made possible by USAgings's Aging and Disability Vaccination Collaborative (ADVC). ADVC distributes funding to organizations across the aging and disability networks to support an array of vaccination education and promotion activities, including community vaccine clinics, in-home vaccinations, transportation to vaccination sites, and outreach and education for older adults and people with disabilities. The ADVC is funded through a grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living. We look forward to this new initiative and the assistance it will provide for those in our region.



The Planning and Development Services (PDS) department works to improve our region by providing planning, economic, and community development services to member local governments and partners at the local and regional levels. Work is primarily focused on the Region's 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This year included a strong focus on providing American Rescue Plan Act local fiscal recovery fund technical assistance and redeveloping the region's CEDS (CEDS 2023-2027).

PDS provides:

- Project Planning & Management
- Grant Development & Administration
- Infrastructure Planning & Implementation
- Mapping, GIS, & Data Services
- Land Use, Zoning & Ordinance Support
- Convening & Facilitation

PRIMARY VISIONS

Ensure all residents of the Upper Coastal Plain region have the resources necessary to lead a healthy and prosperous life

Bolster the region's ability to train, develop, and foster its diverse and talented population

Generate community wealth throughout the Upper Coastal Plain region

SERVICE AREAS

Project Management

Economic Development

Community Development

Disaster Recovery & Resiliency

Grant and Loan Sampling:

- Brownfields and Land Revitalization
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Community Foundations
- NC Department of Environmental Quality
- NC Department of Commerce
- Economic Development Administration
- Southeast Crescent Regional Commission
- Parks & Recreation Trust Fund
- Recovery & Resilience
- USDA – Rural Development
- And more

PDS FY 2022 -2023 IMPACT

60 Active Projects	12 New Projects
↓	↓
Representing \$92+ Million of Investment	\$47,342,498 in New Awards

Planning & Development Staff



BEN FARMER
PDS DIRECTOR



BETSY KANE
Senior Regional Planner



HELEN PAGE
Senior Regional Planner



MARY JANE LYONNAIS
Regional Planner



RON TOWNLEY
Project Manager



TIRENCE HORNE
Regional Planner



TYRA HINES
Regional Planner

PDS efforts supporting economic development, infrastructure, community development, and human development were very significant again this year. As the year closes, PDS aided in bringing a record total of \$47,342,498 in new funds into the region for 12 new projects. Of that funding, approximately \$46.99M was received supporting local projects. The balance of those funds, about \$349K, was for regional projects. Overall, seventy-two (72) total projects were active during the year, of which 12 are in development, 50 are ongoing, and 10 completed or being closed out. PDS is administering \$93,780,468 in active projects overall. Many projects have numerous funders and sub-projects within.

Highlights this year include adoption of a new regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS 2023-2027), the onboarding of a new Regional Planner and SECU Public Service Fellow, development of a far-reaching regional disaster recovery effort, and submission of 38 grant applications. PDS continued strong progress on rural broadband/digital inclusion, local food access, economic development, and ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Fund technical assistance. 11 of our 41 municipalities received critical water and/or sewer infrastructure assistance on 36 separately funded projects. Seven of these projects were new, representing over \$32.5M in new funding. 6 of those projects were funded through state budget appropriations and are administered by PDS, representing \$18.4M in investment that is not included in the new funds total above.

PDS PROJECTS

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Development: UCPCOG was designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the United States Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration (EDA) on June 26, 1996. This designation allows member local governments and allies across the region to access EDA funds for public works and other projects to leverage job creation and generate community wealth through a variety of projects of high regional interest. A key benefit for the UCPCOG/EDD members

and allies is funding to create and maintain for the five-county region an economic development strategy, entitled the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS is reviewed annually and substantially updated every five years in order for the UCPCOG to maintain the EDD designation, provide priority access federal funding, and, most importantly, help guide the region toward sound and sustainable growth.

The current CEDS, CEDS 2023-2027, was adopted in October 2022 by the UCPCOG Board of Directors acting in their capacity as the CEDS Advisory Committee. Development of CEDS 2023-2027 began during the previous fiscal year but continued until the strategy was adopted. Implementation of CEDS 2023-2027 is now a top priority for all of PDS and sets the foundation for all regional planning initiatives. CEDS 2023-2027 visions match the department's primary visions. CEDS 2023-2027's action plan is framed around those visions with 9 distinct initiatives and 91 strategic activities, each with its own evaluation framework.





TRI-COG FEEDS

Local Food: UCPCOG previously received a \$311,500 grant award from EDA for its Tri-COG Food Ecosystem Economic Development Strategy (Tri-COG FEEDS), which partially funds a \$397K mega-region local food system supply chain

effort in partnership with neighboring Triangle J and Kerr Tar COGs. The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust awarded the matching funds. Tri-COG FEEDS aims to better understand the food value chains in the greater 17-county region, additional food system infrastructure and assets that would be most beneficial for economic development, equity and rural-urban connectivity and strategies that reduce the barriers and leverage the strengths of our regional food system. Led by PDS's Food Systems Regional Planner in partnership with the other COGs and project consultant, RTI International, Tri-COG FEEDS has thus far provided a macro-level economic picture of the food landscape in our region, developed an inventory of existing food systems work and compiled reactions from policy making audiences. Project partners have also built a plan for further analysis, explored an opportunity with an equity consultant, and learned more about the COG's, and local governments', role in regional food supply chains through the Wallace Center for Food Systems Leadership Network. To give time for deeper analysis, economic impact and regional strategy building, this project period has been extended to May of 2024. Tri-COG FEEDS is PDS's primary local food project but PDS continues to seek other funds and avenues to develop an equitable food system that builds community health, wealth, and supports our region's dynamic growers and producers. Local food economic development is strongly supported by CEDS 2023-2027.

Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Technical Assistance: Explored in further detail within the PDS Project Spotlight, PDS's American Rescue Plan Act Local Fiscal Recovery Fund technical assistance work is supported through a grant from the NC Association of Regional Councils of Governments and the NC Pandemic Recovery Office. Led by a Senior Planner, the primary goal is to serve as a reliable, local resource for all of the region's local governments as they administer and allocate their local fiscal recovery funds provided by the US Treasury and NC Pandemic Recovery Office through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. In total, the region's local governments received over \$93M in local fiscal recovery funds. PDS works closely with the NC League of Municipalities, NC Association of County Commissioners, UNC School of Government, and others to adequately serve as a resource for its member governments. This was a primary focus area of PDS during FY 22-23 and will continue to be a significant effort through 2026. PDS uses this role strategically to build local government capacity, establish new productive partnerships, develop sustainable projects, and attract additional funds to the region.

Disaster Recovery & Resilience: PDS is implementing a far-reaching regional disaster recovery effort made possible through an NC Association of Regional Councils of Governments Rapid Recovery grant that includes local strategic planning, an analysis of electric vehicle infrastructure needs, local government infrastructure map digitization, disaster recovery grant writing, and more. Led by PDS's Project Manager, partners include Eastern Carolina Council of Governments, Working Landscapes, the Croatan Institute, EXP Energy Services, the North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center at NCSU, the Applied Data Research Institute, and others. PDS will convene stakeholders from across the region as the Rapid Recovery Grant is implemented. Additionally, PDS and UCPCOG Finance staff will be trained in December to then train and aid local governments with their disaster finance administration. Training and resources will then be provided to members in the

winter/spring of 2024.

Brownfields: PDS continued administration and implementation of the EPA Brownfields Assessment grant to address priority sites for UCPCOG Brownfield Coalition member governments. Previously, UCPCOG applied for and received a \$300,000 EPA Assessment Grant Award to address the JAECO and Westpoint Stevens (Sonrise) sites in Roanoke Rapids, the M&M Grill in Littleton, and other potentially contaminated sites with redevelopment potential. Additional work was conducted in Scotland Neck to develop a Phase 1 assessment at the former Allsbrook Oil Site and in Sharpsburg at a former automotive services site during FY 22-23. The Brownfields Coalition is considering additional priority projects for another EPA Brownfields grant which will be submitted next fiscal year. Any UCPCOG member government is welcome to join the Brownfields Coalition.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure: PDS continues to conduct water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure grant writing and administration, planning, mapping, and technical assistance. This is a major focus of PDS with a large commitment of dedicated staff, contractors, and other resources. To support the increase in demand primarily in this area of focus, PDS hired an additional Regional Planner in January. New projects in FY 22-23 totaled approximately \$32.3M for member governments. UCPCOG continues to serve as a leader in public sector awards for water and sewer infrastructure improvements that connect or repair hundreds of home connections and improve member government systems' assets and operations. Developing projects requires a substantial fiscal commitment that, if awarded, is often recovered years later. Grant development and administration usually include project scoping and design, housing income verifications, preliminary engineering work and estimates, environmental review and compliance, fair housing analyses, engineering selection and management, contractor selection and management, and more. In total, PDS is currently administering over \$83M in water and wastewater projects on behalf of its member governments.

Housing: PDS continued to assist member governments with affordable housing needs, primarily through the continued housing replacement efforts underway across 13 communities. New housing replacement grants were awarded during FY 22-23 that totaled \$2,423,439 for three projects in Princeville, Seaboard, and Stantonsburg. The housing program in total has brought over \$9M to the region through the NC Department of Commerce's Community Development Block Grant Neighborhood Revitalization Program. PDS will pursue funds for a regional housing assessment next fiscal year, which will include a focus on identifying sites for residential development/redevelopment with high impacts on the region's workforce availability and central business districts.

Parks & Recreation: PDS developed a parks and recreation master plans, park site plans, recreation needs surveys, and Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant applications for the towns of Enfield and Lucama during FY 22-23. This represents a new focus area for PDS supported by CEDS 2023-2027. Parks and recreation planning and project development will remain a focus area for PDS.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Technical Assistance to Local Governments on Administration of American Rescue Plan

Act Funds: A National Association of Development Organizations Award Winner

PROJECT SUMMARY

PDS supported its member governments with advanced technical assistance, training,



and regional collaboration as the communities navigated the complex and novel federal requirements for administration of their local American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Totalling \$93 million across 46 local governments in UCPCOG's service area, the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA State and Local Relief Funds) were a great, but challenging, opportunity for the region. PDS took the challenge on and created the UCPCOG ARPA Technical Assistance Program in partnership with the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Governments (NCARCOG), North Carolina League of Municipalities, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, and the NC Pandemic Recovery Office. The technical assistance program was designed to educate, plan, guide, and strengthen UCPCOG member communities as they worked through federal and state limitations and restrictions on the funds and the myriad of reporting requirements associated with this large investment.

PDS's trainings and advisement helped localities strategize about this unique windfall funding – how to leverage it, how to match community needs to ARPA funds versus the other types of funding that are available, and how to think carefully about allocating an unusually flexible one-time federal grant in the context of multiple urgent needs. Emphasizing a strategic approach has helped UCPCOG's member governments meet more of their highest priority needs on their limited budgets and staff capacity. UCPCOG has also taken this opportunity to strengthen relations with communities in its service area that have not been UCPCOG members in the past. Having this technical assistance program has only strengthened UCPCOG's understanding of the needs of its member communities and what the regional organization can do to enhance and strengthen the region's resilience.



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Chairman

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Andre Knight	City of Rocky Mount Council
Leo Taylor	Mayor Pro-Tem, Town of Tarboro
Ralph D. Webb	County Commissioner



Miranda Boykin
Vice-Chair

HALIFAX COUNTY

Greg Browning	City of Roanoke Rapids
Dia Denton	Halifax County Manager
Mondale Robinson	Mayor, Town of Enfield
Barbara Simmons	Halifax County At-Large

NASH COUNTY

Fred Belfield	County Commissioner
Brenda Brown	Mayor, Town of Nashville
Brenda Lucas	Commissioner, Town of Spring Hope
Mark Frohman	Nash County At-Large



Dia Denton
Secretary / Treasurer

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

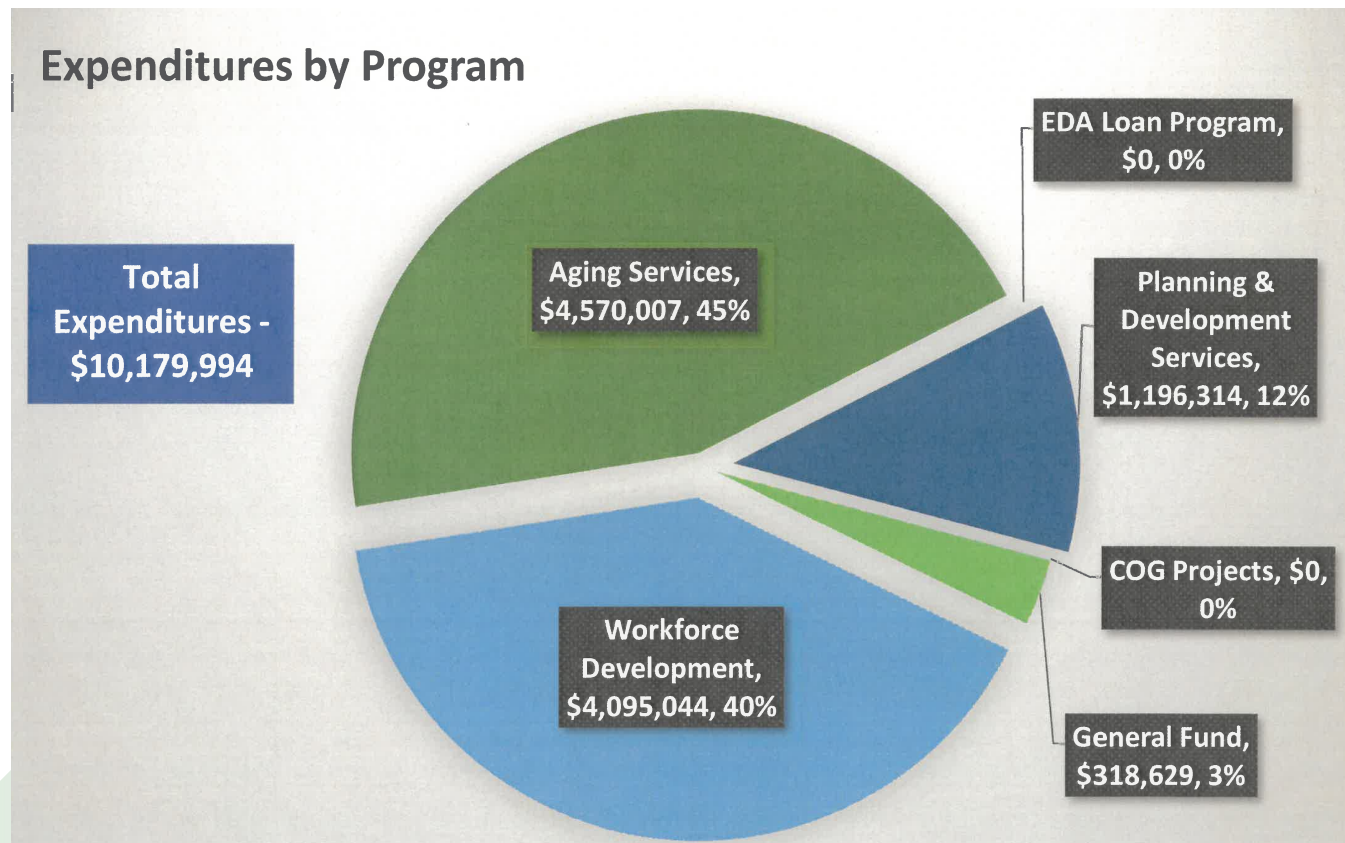
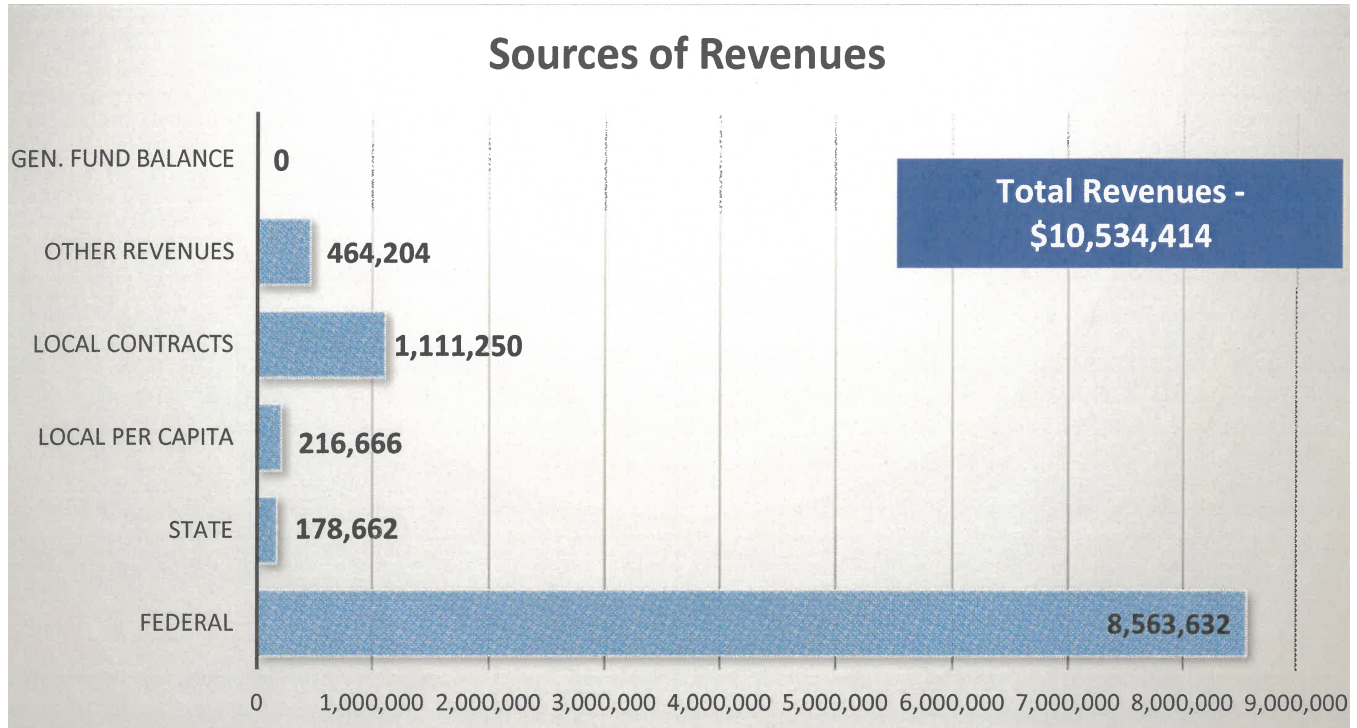
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Matthew Lassiter	Commissioner, Town of Jackson
Charles Tyner	County Board Commissioner
Julian Phillips	Northampton County Manager

WILSON COUNTY

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Reginald Harris	Wilson County At-Large
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