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## July 2023 Newsletter

### Regional Impacts

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#### **ECC Executive Committee Meeting - Thursday, July 13<sup>th</sup>**

An ECC Executive Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m., and the Executive Committee meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. A Budget and Audit Committee meeting will be held prior to dinner.

For the purpose of establishing a quorum and ordering food for dinner, please confirm your attendance at the meeting by registering at <http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=gppuxoyab&oeidk=a07ejuu73f5463c9152>.

The meeting will also be accessible virtually via Zoom at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85058333100?pwd=THpoNzZ3TVZVU2hIbUlITjFudzJBQT09>.

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#### **DEADLINE EXTENDED – Disaster Resiliency Prioritization / Grant Writing Assistance – Please Complete ECC Disaster Resiliency Interest Survey by July 14<sup>th</sup>**

ECC has some funding available to assist local governments in our region evaluate and prioritize their needs, as they relate to disaster resiliency. To confirm communities' interest in participating in the program, ECC is conducting a disaster resilience survey. The overall intent of the effort is to expand the capacity of local governments that are susceptible to natural disasters so they effectively can plan for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from declared disaster events, to restore community services back to pre-disaster conditions and make communities more resilient in dealing with future disasters.

**Local governments interested in participating in this program are asked to complete a survey by July 14<sup>th</sup>, and the survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/eccdr>.**

PLEASE NOTE: Local governments in the ECC region that do not respond to this survey will still be included in any developed region-wide initiatives, but they may NOT be considered for more direct, individualized technical assistance.

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**ECC Assists the Town of Faison with Grant Application; Town Receives a \$180,000 Rural Transformation Grant Award**

Congratulations to the Town of Faison on receiving a Rural Transformation Grant award of \$180,000! The grant award was announced on June 16<sup>th</sup>. ECC Community, Planner Holly Craighead Lippitt, assisted with the grant application. Faison will use the funds to make improvements to their Town Park.

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## **ECC Assists the Town of Bogue with Updating Land Use Ordinances to be Compliant with 160D Requirements**

ECC's Senior Community Planner, Carlton Gideon, assisted the Town of Bogue and several other communities in updating their ordinances to be compliant with the 160D requirements of the NC General Statutes. We are proud of the efforts our staff make to assist communities in our region! For more information, visit [https://www.carolinacoastonline.com/news\\_times/article\\_b2b61148-142f-11ee-b82b-674ba3b7d489.html](https://www.carolinacoastonline.com/news_times/article_b2b61148-142f-11ee-b82b-674ba3b7d489.html).

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## **A Craven Community College Student Shadowed ECC Staff**

The ECC Planning Department recently welcomed Oliver Floyd, a student in the Craven Community College Early College Program, for 2 days of shadowing. Oliver is interested in pursuing a career in urban planning, and he spent time with each member of the Planning staff. We enjoyed Oliver's time with us, and we wish him the best as he pursues his academic and career goals!



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## **Big Gains in Educational Attainment in Greene and Duplin Counties**

Currently, 1.55 million North Carolinians aged 25-44 hold a postsecondary degree or credential, and NC has a goal of having 2 million by 2030. Continued efforts will help NC reach this goal. Congratulations to Greene County, Duplin County, and their partners for 5%+ improvement in three years! For more information, visit <https://www.myfuturenc.org/news/educational-attainment-gains-throughout-north-carolina/>.

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## **DERPO Updates**

**SPOT 7.0 Update:** The submittal window for new SPOT 7.0 projects will open on July 1. This will allow MPOs and RPOs to begin evaluating potential projects on SPOT Online, the NCDOT portal for SPOT project submission. Initial conversations on new DERPO submittals will take place at the July TCC and TAC meetings, county transportation committee meetings, and one-on-one with our local partners. The deadline for submittals is September 30, and it is DERPO's goal to have a final list of submittals ready for approval at the September TCC and TAC meetings, with final submittal taking place immediately afterwards.

**Carteret County CTP Update:** The next meeting concerning the Carteret County CTP will take place on Wednesday, July 19 at the Carteret County Transportation Committee in Morehead City. A Carteret County Transportation Survey that concluded on April 30 is being analyzed by our NCDOT partners.

**RPO Funding Update:** Beginning with the new fiscal year on July 1, all RPO grants will be increased 15%, which will increase the DERPO budget for FY 2024 roughly to \$160,000. In addition, local dues will no longer be a flat 20% local match, but they will correspond with the Tier status of member counties. If a RPO member county is a Tier 1 county, which is true in the case of DERPO, then local dues for all counties will be a local match

of 5%. The difference will be provided by state funds distributed quarterly.

**Other Updates:** Preliminary design work continues for projects throughout the region, such as roundabouts at the intersections of NC 58 and Mangrove Dr, and NC 58 and Coast Guard Rd in Emerald Isle, as well as continuing project design for the widening of Miller Blvd. in Havelock. Both the US 70/I-42 Commission and US 17-64 Association recently met, providing corridor updates to local and regional partners. The next quarterly meeting of the NC Association of RPOs will be held in Boone on July 27-28.

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## ECRPO Updates

**Prioritization 7.0:** Every 2 years the North Carolina Department of Transportation updates the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). The STIP is a 10-year, fiscally constrained, planning document that outlines all future projects the Department will undertake. To create this plan, NCDOT solicits projects from Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs like ours), and each NCDOT Division and scores them against each other - to determine priority. The process for selecting these projects is called Prioritization. Starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, we will begin Prioritization 7.0.

The ECRPO has created a Prioritization Subcommittee to determine projects that the RPO will submit. We have been allotted 21 slots per mode to which projects may be submitted. This means that we have the potential to submit 21 highway, 21 bicycle and pedestrian, 21 aviation, 21 rail, and 21 public transit projects. The committee meets every other week on Friday mornings to discuss potential projects and review estimated scoring with RPO staff. ECRPO staff will be presenting the results of that committee to the TCC and TAC at our regularly scheduled meetings, and a final list of submitted projects is set to be approved at the September ECRPO TCC and TAC meeting. From there the projects will go on the ECRPO website for public review and will be submitted to NCDOT for scoring no later than September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Greene County CTP:** A Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) is a long-range planning document created to outline the needs and goals for transportation in a given region. Unlike the STIP, CTPs do not have to be fiscally constrained and are not a guarantee that the projects listed in them are coming to fruition. These documents typically have a scope of 25 to 50 years and are updated every 10 years. The last Greene County CTP was completed in 2013.

The Greene County CTP Steering Committee is a group of local elected officials, county staff, DOT staff, and ECRPO staff who meet to guide and provide input on the CTP. While the Transportation Planning Division of NCDOT does most of the heavy work, the Steering Committee provides important local insight on the needs and goals of the community. The Committee first met in early June and was educated on its role, a timeline for the plan, and set a meeting schedule for the remainder of the CTP development cycle. The Committee will meet monthly, going forward.

**RPO Funding Adjustments:** In early June of 2023, RPOs across the state were informed that NCDOT was increasing RPO funding by 15% for each RPO statewide. In addition to this, local match percentages were adjusted, as well. Essentially, whatever county has the highest economic tier status in the RPO will set the local match percentage for the ENTIRE RPO. In the case of the ECRPO, currently all counties are Tier 1 status. This means that the total match from our 4 counties will total 5% of the allotted money from NCDOT, the State will match 15%, and the other 80% will be reimbursed federally, as it always has been. The 15% funding increase for the ECRPO brings our 'FY24 funding from \$132,969 to \$153,000.

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## ECC Joins the American Flood Coalition; Encourages Local Governments to Join

At its June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, the ECC General Membership Board adopted a resolution to join the American Flood Coalition. There is no cost to join, and there are benefits to joining.

The American Flood Coalition (online at <https://floodcoalition.org/>) is a nonpartisan group of political, military, business, and local leaders that have come together to drive adaptation to the reality of higher seas, stronger storms, and more frequent flooding. The coalition seeks to advance solutions that support flood-affected communities and protect our nation's residents, economy, and military installations. Duplin County, the City of New Bern, the City of Jacksonville, the Town of Wallace, and the Town of North Topsail Beach are members of the American Flood Coalition.

Tony McEwen is the Carolinas Director at the American Flood Coalition. In his role, Tony seeks to advance policy solutions and strengthen AFC's presence at the state and local levels in North and South Carolina. Tony has nearly two decades of politics and advocacy experience at the local, state, and federal level in North Carolina. He previously served as Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs Director for the City of Wilmington (NC), leading the city's state and federal advocacy efforts. Following Hurricane Florence, Tony initiated a large bipartisan coalition of leaders across Eastern North Carolina, which then partnered with AFC to advance flood resilience at the state and federal level. Prior to joining the City of Wilmington, he served in senior positions for multiple members of Congress.

For more information, contact Tony McEwen at [tony@floodcoalition.org](mailto:tony@floodcoalition.org).

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On June 6, 2023, the North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature (NCSTHL) members held their Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh. Participants included North Carolina state government officials and state legislators, North Carolina Area Agencies on Aging, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, and community sponsors. Participants celebrated the Thirtieth Anniversary of its formation and honored those senators who established the NCSTHL.



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### **Prime Time Caregiver Luncheon**

Prime Time, a mission of Oriental United Church in Oriental, North Carolina, provided an informative luncheon and panel discussion for caregivers on June 16, 2023. Participants received information from a panel of professionals who discussed long-term care insurance, how to handle behaviors with individuals living with cognitive impairment, how to take care, to give care, and much more.

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## Webinars / Courses

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### ECC to Offer 2-Day Grant Writing Class - July 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>

ECC hosted a 2-day grant writing class in March, and folks have requested that we host it again, so we are! ECC is hosting a 2-day grant writing workshop for our membership on July 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 to 4:30 for the first 35 people to register. ECC Community Planner, Holly C. Lippitt, will be the trainer for this event.

The workshop will provide opportunities to learn the various types and categories of grants, including federal and private foundation grants, as well as a glossary of terminology. The workshop will also provide time for attendees to learn the various concepts necessary to develop a grant. Participants are asked to come with an identified need from their community to develop a grant application. We will search for available grant opportunities on <https://www.grants.gov/> and a local database. If your community is interested, you register at <http://events.r2o.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ejtdqoti8b43078f&llr=gppuxoyab>.

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### NC Digital Equity Survey

The State of NC is seeking input on the accessibility and affordability of digital devices and the internet, as well as the public's digital skills; the survey takes about 10 minutes to complete and is online at [https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9EpNXtAhUn7IOQS](https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9EpNXtAhUn7IOQS).

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## Grant Opportunities

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**Southeast Crescent Regional Commission's (SCRC) State Economic and the Infrastructure Development (SEID) grant program**, which resulted from the Commission's 5-year Strategic Plan (2023-2028) is to revitalize/stimulate AL's, GA's, MS', NC's, SC's, and VA's public infrastructure improvements and economic development projects for telecommunications, transportation, high-quality health care, access to affordable housing, business and workforce development, resource conservation and preservation, and tourism and recreation. Sixty-nine NC counties will be eligible for \$4,466,111; Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico, and Wayne Counties are included in the funding notice. The goals are: 1) Invest

in Critical Infrastructure; 2) Improve Health and Support Services Access and Outcomes; 3) Strengthen Workforce Capacity; 4) Expand Affordable Housing Stock and Access; and 5) Promote Environmental, Conservation, Preservation, and Access. The **deadline for pre-applications is July 21, 2023**, the full application portal opens on **Aug. 7, 2023**, and the **full application is due Sept. 15, 2023**. Notification of SEID Awards will be announced on Nov. 14, 2023.

Local governments (village, town, city, and county) and non-profits (IRS designated 501 (c)(3) and 501 (a)) are eligible. \$20M-\$500M is the award ceiling. The federal cost share for projects: may not exceed 50% - in transitional counties or isolated areas of distress for projects in distressed counties, may not exceed 80% in distressed counties, and can be increased by 60-90% for multi-county or multi-state. Visit <https://scrc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SCRC-SEID-Grant-NOFA-06082023-release.pdf> and <https://scrc.gov/southeast-crescent-regional-commission-scrs-announces-20-million-in-new-funding-through-the-state-economic-and-infrastructure-development-seid-grant-program/>



### **USDOT, Build America Bureau, NEW Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program.**

There is no requirement for cost sharing or matching the grant funds in this Program. Prepare the application as a MS Word document and cut/paste it into the online application form – to submit by 2 PM EST on August 14, 2023. No PDFs nor attachments will be permitted. The notice of funding is available at this link

<https://cms.buildamerica.dot.gov/buildamerica/sites/buildamerica.dot.gov/files/2023-06/Program%20website%20version%20NOFO%20updated.pdf> .

Be sure to attend the **webinar on July 20, 2023, at 3:00 PM EST** by registering at the next link. Visit <https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/RuralandTribalGrants>.

The New Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program makes \$10 million available over 5 years to provide states, local governments, and tribal governments with grants to support project development leading to future applications to DOT credit or grant programs. The grants can support legal, technical, and financial advisors to help them advance infrastructure projects. The 1<sup>st</sup> notice of funding opportunity will include 2 fiscal years and will make \$3.4 million available to eligible applicants on a 1<sup>st</sup> come, 1<sup>st</sup> served basis. Eligible project sponsors may receive grant funds to select advisors to assist with: Feasibility studies; project planning; revenue forecasting, funding, and financing options analyses; preliminary engineering and design work; environmental review; economic assessments and cost-benefit analyses; public benefits studies; technical, legal, and financial advisory assistance; and evaluation of potential projects to be delivered through alternative delivery methods.

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## ARPA Resources

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### **UNC, Chapel Hill, School of Government**

**ARP/CSLFRF Training Opportunities – SOG / ARP Office Hours:** Kara Millonzi hosts weekly ARPA office hours to help answer eligibility, compliance, and reporting questions related to the ARP/CSLFRF award. **If needed, email Rebecca Badgett for the Zoom**

**link:** [rbadgett@sog.unc.edu](mailto:rbadgett@sog.unc.edu)

**Preparing for the Audit.** As the fiscal year closed last week, it's a good time to focus on the upcoming annual audit. Most local governments spent at least some of their ARP/CSLFRF funds this fiscal year, which may trigger additional audit scrutiny. There are things you can do now to prepare for a successful audit. This [blog post](#) provides (hopefully helpful) guidance on preparing you (and your auditor) to audit ARP/CSLFRF funds.

**ARPA Flex.** “Any day now……” It seems like a running joke now that we are still waiting on ARPA Flex regulations that were due back in February, but we keep hearing “any day now.” For those wondering what ARPA Flex is, Congress authorized some additional expenditure options for local governments who received over \$10 million in ARP/CSLFRF and must expend funds outside of the revenue replacement category. The new expenditure options relate to certain transportation projects, CDBG projects, and disaster recovery projects. But we need to wait for the US Treasury to issue regulations interpreting the flex provisions. Any day now……”

**Upcoming Office Hours.** Note that several of these are focused on special topics, including ARP BASICS, which is a 2-hour session targeted to those new(er) to ARP/CSLFRF.

Thursday, June 29, 8:30-10:30am – ARP BASICS

1. Thursday, July 13, 12-1pm – Focus on Program Income for Water/Wastewater Projects

2. Thursday, July 20, 8:30-9:30am – Focus on Procurement
3. Friday, July 28, 12-1pm
4. Wednesday, August 2, 8:30-9:30am
5. Friday, August 11, 8:30-10:30am -- ARP BASICS
6. Wednesday, August 16, 12-1pm – Focus on Property Management
7. Friday, August 25, 8:30-9:30am

### **ZOOM LOG IN**

Here is the new Zoom Log in for all Office Hour Sessions:

<https://zoom.us/j/95481909044?pwd=UIE2VHNhN2luSoJEYTJqeTZTMFRWdz09>

Meeting ID: 954 8190 9044

Passcode: 779726

One tap mobile

+16469313860,,95481909044# US

+19292056099,,95481909044# US (New York)

Free course: [Using ARPA Funds to Directly Fund a Capital Project](#) (launched August 2022).

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### **Next Scheduled Meetings**

ECC's 2-Day Grant Writing Workshop  
July 10-11, 2023 – 9:00-4:30 (both days)  
ECC's 3rd Floor Conference Room

Regional Aging Advisory Committee (RAAC) Meeting  
July 10, 2023 – 10:00 AM  
ECC's 3rd Floor Meeting Room

Senior Tar Heel Legislature (STHL) Meeting  
July 10, 2023 – 11:00 AM  
ECC's 3rd Floor Meeting Room

ECC Executive Committee Meeting & Budget and Audit Committee Meeting - before dinner.  
July 13, 2023 – Dinner 6:00 PM, Meeting 6:30 PM  
ECC's 3rd Floor Conference Room

DERPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Meeting  
July 18, 2023 – 10:00 AM  
ECC's Offices

ECRPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) & Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting  
July 20, 2023 – 9:00 AM  
LaGrange Community Center

Quarterly ECC City-County Managers' Meeting  
July 27, 2023 – 11:00 AM  
ECC's Offices

AAA SE4A Regional Aging Conference (This is for 9 states and NC is hosting!)  
Aug. 27-30, 2023  
Asheville, NC

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Eastern Carolina Council of Government (ECCOG) would love to share your news  
with the Region. Email your stories to [executivedirector@eccog.org](mailto:executivedirector@eccog.org).

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