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## ECC'S APRIL 2025 NEWSLETTER

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## NEWS AND EVENTS

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**REGISTER OPEN - FEMA Disaster Recovery Public Assistance Financial Administration Training. Registration for this FREE training event closes on April 4th.** The training is designed to help local communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters. The session is well suited for local government staff with financial administration responsibilities, first responders and emergency management professionals, local administrators, and elected officials.

North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Governments (NCARCOG) is continuing its commitment to support local governments by providing this updated version of public assistance training in a single day format that highlights changes in FEMA's Public Assistance Grant Program requirements. In Eastern NC, the training will take place on **Thursday, April 10, 2025**, from 9:00-4:30 at the **Lumber River Council of Governments**, 30 CJ Walker Road, Pembroke, NC.

To register, send an email to [NCARCOGtraining@hscille.net](mailto:NCARCOGtraining@hscille.net) to register everyone, noting any dietary requirements and any accommodation needs. Registration must be received by Friday, April 4th. NCARCOG is made up of the Eastern Carolina Council and the other 15 councils of government (COGS) in NC. In 2023-24, ECC and the other COGS provided Disaster Recovery Public Assistance Financial Administration Training in each of the regions.

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**ECC provided facilitation for Kinston's Goal Strategic Planning.**

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David Bone facilitated Kinston's strategic planning workshop.



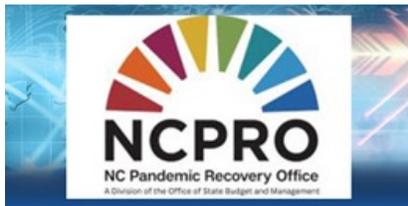
Kinston staff considered future goals.



Kinston's leadership identified its goals through SWOT Analysis.



A vision for Kinston's future.



### Announcing NC's Federal Grant Management Technical Assistance Sessions.

NCPRO's will offer 8 sessions on separate grant management topics from April 3rd to Dec. 4th. Local governments' associated personnel, grant managers, fiscal agents, and policy team members will learn to apply 2 CFR 200, the NC Administrative Code in relation to NCPRO federal funding focused

on State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF). Follow the link to the PDF,

Session 1, *Federal Funds Closeout Process*, begins on Thurs., April 3rd from 3:00-4:30 on Microsoft TEAMS via this [LINK](#).

Attend the first session to learn more about the following additional sessions:

Session 2 - *Pass-Through Entity Requirements*, May 8th, 3:00-4:30 PM.

Session 3 - *General/Entity Level Standards*, June 5th, 3:00-4:30 PM.

Session 4 - *Financial Management*, Aug. 7th, 3:00-4:30 PM.

Session 5 - *Internal Controls*, Sept. 4th, 3:00-4:30 PM.

Session 6 - *Procurement*, Oct. 2nd, 3:00-4:30 PM.

Session 7 - *Equipment & Property Management*, Nov. 6th, 3:00-4:30 PM.

Session 8 - *Time and Effort*, Dec. 4th, 3:00-4:30 PM.

## PLANNING NOTES



**Are you 160D compliant?** North Carolina General Statute Chapter 160D, is the combining and modernization of county and city enabling statutes for local development regulation, took effect on June 19, 2020. The deadline to adopt updates conforming local development regulations to Chapter

160D was July 1, 2021. Communities with zoning, subdivision, and other types of development ordinances must be compliant with 160D.

Are your ordinances 160D-compliant? Check the following:

- Does your ordinance frequently reference 153A or 160A?
- Does your ordinance refer to hearings to solicit public comment on a legislative decision as a “public hearing” instead of “legislative hearing”?
- Does your ordinance fail to reference conflict of interest standards that must be followed by governing and appointed board members and staff?

If you answered “yes,” or are unsure about any of the points above, your ordinances may need to be updated for 160D compliance. Please keep in mind, conformance with these enabling statutes are not optional. They are necessary for the administration and enforcement of the regulations that protect your community.

Please contact Carlton Gideon, Senior Community Planner, to evaluate becoming compliant with NCGS 160D.

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### **Zoning and Adopted Plans**

Is your zoning enforceable? One of the most significant updates brought about by General Statutes Chapter 160D is the requirement for a “reasonably maintained” plan, either a comprehensive plan or land-use plan, to enforce zoning regulations. This means if your governing board has not adopted a plan, your **zoning may not be legally** enforceable. If you do not have a zoning ordinance, an ordinance cannot be adopted until a plan is adopted. The deadline for adoption for towns and cities with 1,500 and fewer residents was July 1, 2023. The deadline for counties and all other municipalities was July 1, 2022.

160D does not provide details on what is considered “reasonably maintained.” UNC School of Government suggests updates every 5 to 10 years. The older an adopted plan and the more changes in a community that are not reflected on that plan, the more likely it cannot be defended as “reasonably maintained,” which can increase the jurisdiction’s vulnerability to civil claims in court on the validity of local ordinances, plans, and processes.

Zoning is a powerful tool; its impacts are noticeable, and it should be carefully and responsibly used. Aside from being a (significant) box to check off to maintain zoning, a quality plan should work in tandem with a community’s development regulations and serve as a useful policy guide.

Please contact Carlton Gideon, Senior Community Planner, if you are interested in exploring this planning process and the relationship it has with zoning.

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### **Updating your zoning ordinance? Note. Session Law 2024-57 requirements ...**

If you are considering an amendment to your community’s zoning ordinance, or have adopted amendments since June 14, 2024, please be aware of the expanded definition of down-zoning brought about by SB 382. Session Law 2024-57 (Senate Bill 382), adopted December 11, 2024, affects zoning amendments adopted after June 14, 2024.

This expanded definition removes the exception for local governments, which means a local government cannot initiate a down-zoning amendment without the consent of all affected property owners.

With the passage of SB 382, down-zoning includes any of the following:

- Decreasing development density.
- Reducing the number of permitted uses.

- Creating any type of non-conformity in a non-residential zoning district (including use, lot, structure, improvement, or site element).

If a local government desires updating regulations for a zoning district that would be considered down-zoning, that local government now needs written consent from every single owner of property within the affected zoning district.

These changes, to the definition of down-zoning, make many amendments that were previously allowed through local government initiation, are now infeasible or practically impossible.

Please contact Carlton Gideon, Senior Community Planner, [cgideon@eccog.org](mailto:cgideon@eccog.org), if you have questions.

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## ECC AREA ON AGING (AAA) NEWS

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FLIP THE SCRIPT ON AGING: MAY 2025

**Older Americans Month 2025 - Flip the Script on Aging.** Every May, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) leads the nation's observance of Older Americans Month (OAM). May is a time to recognize older Americans' contributions, highlight aging trends, and reaffirm our commitment to serving older adults in our communities.

The 2025 theme is **Flip the Script on Aging**. The theme focuses on transforming how society perceives, talks about, and approaches aging. "It encourages individuals and communities to challenge stereotypes and dispel misconceptions. This year, join us in honoring older adults' contributions, exploring the many opportunities for staying active and engaged as we age, and highlighting the opportunities for purpose, exploration, and connection that come with aging." County providers across the region will be hosting events in honor of Older Americans Month. For events in your area, contact your local Senior Center for further information. <https://acl.gov/oam/2025/older-americans-month-2025>.

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**NC Senior Tar Heel Legislative (NCSTHL) representatives and NC Area Agency on Aging staff members met in Raleigh for the NCSTHL General Session Meeting.**



On March 4th and 5th, the NCSTHL representatives were provided an orientation, discussed the NCSTHL priorities submitted to the NC Legislation, and spoke with NC Legislators on behalf of older adults across the state. Legislative Priorities for 2025-2026 are: Adult Protective Services, Senior centers, Home & Community Care Block Grant, older adult housing, new community-based services program, long-term care Ombudsman program, healthcare workforce crisis, and nursing home staffing standards. For further information on the NC Senior Tar Heel Legislation visit, <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/aging/division-aging-councils-and-committees/nc-senior-tar-heel-legislature#2024-25IssuesCommittees-5628>.

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**North Carolina  
Senior Games**

**North Carolina Senior Games 2025:** The North Carolina Senior Games (NCSG) began in 1983 with a vision to create a year-round health promotion and wellness education program for adults 55 years of age and better; currently, the age is now 50+. The Senior Games' mission is truly grassroots in North Carolina and has placed our State far beyond other states with a structure that is participant driven.

Annually, from February to June, 54 Local Games kick-off competition in all 100 NC Counties. Local participants 50+ years of age and older compete in 30+ sports and arts categories.

In Eastern Carolina, Senior Games are held in Carteret Co., Onslow Co., Wayne Co., and the Neuse River region (comprised of Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, and Pamlico Counties). They compete with 50 other Senior Games for a chance to compete at the State games and National games. For more information or to register to compete, please visit <https://www.ncseniorgames.org/> or meet with one of the ECCAAA team members.

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**ECCAAA Provides Presentations on the “My Plate” App:** ECC's Digital Navigator, Cynthia Livingston, provided MyPlate app presentations at various sites to introduce the "My Plate" app to Seniors. She visited the Craven County Senior Center, the Comfort Center nutrition site in Jones County, and the Pollockville nutrition site in Jones County. “My Plate” is a phone app created by USDA to help provide information about healthy eating habits. For more information, visit <https://www.myplate.gov/resources/tools/startsimple-myplate-app>. The app can also be downloaded at Google Play and the Apple App Store.

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**ECCAAA's Ombudsmen Discussed 2025 Legislative Priorities:** Angelia Pridgen and Lauren Latshaw attended the Friends of Residents (FOR) Board of Directors Meeting to review and discuss the 2025 legislative priorities, which were adopted as FOR priorities in January 2025. They are to:

1. Strengthen the aging, disability, and health care workforce.
2. Strengthen the State's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.
3. Adjust the Special Assistance rate to increase access to Affordable Care.
4. Create transparency to provide better care and support to residents in long-term care facilities.
5. Increase the Medicaid estate recovery threshold to \$120,000.

For more information, please visit <https://forltc.org/>.

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ECCAAA Staff Member, January Brown, attended the Trillium Crisis Intervention Training Annual Recognition event in Greenville.

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# UPCOMING MEETINGS

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Legislative Day – NC Association of Regional Councils of Government (NCARCOG), April 2, Raleigh.

NCARCOG FEMA Disaster Recovery Public Assistance Financial Administration Training, April 10, 30 CJ Walker Rd., Pembroke, NC.

ECC Executive Committee Meeting, April 10, 6:00 PM Dinner, 6:30 PM Meeting, ECC Offices.

Good Friday Holiday, April 18, ECC Office - closed.

No DERPO and ECRPO TCC and TAC Meetings in April.

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ECRPO TCC and TAC Meetings, May 15, 9:30-10:30 AM, La Grange Community Center.

DERPO TCC Meeting, May 20, 10:00-11:00 AM, ECC Board Room.

DERPO TAC Meeting, May 27, 10:00-11:30 AM, ECC BOARD Room.

Older Americans Month 2025 - *Flip the Script on Aging*.

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## CONNECT WITH US!



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*Eastern Carolina Council Mission - to improve the region's quality of life by providing human, planning, and economic development services to local governments and area residents by leveraging resources and collaborating regionally.*

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Eastern Carolina Council | PO Box 1717 | New Bern, NC 28560 US

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