Eastern Carolina Council

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FALL NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

ECC MISSION STATEMENT

The Eastern Carolina Council's mission is 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.

ECC VISION STATEMENT

Eastern Carolina Council's vision is to be the recognized resource leading and engaging local governments, citizens and stakeholders in an innovative collaborative manner to meet changing needs while enhancing and promoting a vibrant region.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

DATE	EVENT/MEETING	TIME
OCTOBER 2026	NATIONAL RESIDENT RIGHT MONTH	
10/8/2026	ECC GMB Meeting	6:30 PM
10/14/2026	Rural NC Listening Sessions- Maysville Town Hall	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
10/23/2026	ECCAAA Regional Provider Meeting	

NOVEMBER 2026	NATIONAL CAREGIVERS & ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS MONTH	
11/5/2026	Greene County Senior Center National Caregivers Month Candle Light Virgil	5:30 PM
11/12/2026	ECC Executive Committee Meeting	6:30 PM

AREA AGENCY on AGING (AAA)

Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) were formally established in 1973 as part of the reauthorization of the federal Older Americans Act.
They were created to serve as regional organizations dedicated to helping older adults maintain their independence and dignity at home.
Area Agency's on Aging are designated by the North Carolina Division of Aging to address the needs and concerns of all older people at the regional and local levels.
The foundational role of AAAs is to provide local information and referral/assistance to help consumers find aging and other home and community-based services.
AAAs help clients match services and solutions to their individual needs, enabling consumers to age in place with increased health, safety, and independence.

AAA Mission Statement:

The Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging will advocate, plan, develop, and support a comprehensive system of quality services designed to attain and preserve quality of life, health, and independence of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers.

AAA Vision Statement:

Older adults and their families will be valued and supported by there community.

October is Residents' Rights Month

October is Residents' Rights Month, a time to recognize and promote the dignity, respect, and rights of individuals living in nursing homes and other long-term care communities. Every resident has the right to be treated with dignity and respect,

make choices about their daily life and care, participate in their care planning, voice concerns without fear of retaliation, maintain privacy, and stay connected with family, friends, and their community. Residents also have the right to be informed about their rights and to have those rights honored. During October, we encourage residents, families, and caregivers to know your rights, speak up, and ask questions. Understanding your rights is an important step toward ensuring that every person receives the quality, care and respect they deserve.
The ECCAAA Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for the rights and quality of life of residents in long-term care facilities. Ombudsmen can help residents and families understand their rights, address concerns, and work toward resolving problems. Every resident deserves to be heard, respected, and treated with dignity every day, not just in October.

For further resources, information, and assistance please contact Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at 252-638-3185 or visit **Long Term Care – Eastern Carolina Council of Government**.

Your Loved One Is in a Nursing Home, Your Role Still Matters

Moving a loved one into a nursing home is one of the hardest decisions a family can make. Families may experience a mixture of relief, guilt, worry, and uncertainty. Although the day-to-day caregiving may change, family involvement does not end when a loved one moves into long-term care. It becomes a different kind of caregiving that is one centered on connection, communication, observation, and advocacy. Family members often know their loved ones better than anyone. They may be the first person to notice that something has changed such as a new bruise, weight loss, increased confusion, withdrawal, a change in appetite, or simply that your loved one does not seem like themselves. This awareness matters.

Family members are often the first to notice changes in their loved one. Being involved does not mean looking for something wrong every time you visit. It means getting to know your loved one's care team, understanding their care plan, and noticing changes. Staying involved can help prevent problems and ensure your loved one's needs are being met. Attend care plan meetings, ask questions, visit regularly, build relationships with staff, and document changes or concerns. If something does not seem right, speak up. Start by talking with facility staff or leadership. If concerns continue, families can contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program helps residents and families understand and exercise their rights. North Carolina residents have the right to receive adequate and appropriate care and be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Remember, your role as a caregiver does not end when your loved one enters long-term care it changes. Your visits matter, your questions matter, and your voice matter.

For further information and support contact:

Angelia Pridgen
Lead Regional Ombudsman
252-638-3185 ext. 3007
apridgen@eccog.org

Or visit our website at: **OMBUDSMAN – Eastern Carolina Council of Government**

Make a Difference in Your Community: Volunteer with ECCAAA

Volunteers are an important part of the work we do at the Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging (ECCAAA). Your time, experience, and voice can help strengthen services and improve the quality of life for older adults, caregivers, and long-term care residents throughout our region. ECCAAA currently has volunteer opportunities available through several important programs.

- **Regional Aging Advisory Committee (RAAC) -** RAAC members provide valuable input on the needs and concerns of older adults across our nine-county region. Members help identify gaps in services, share community perspectives, and advise ECCAAA on issues affecting older adults and caregivers.

- **NC Senior Tar Heel Legislator (STHL) -** The STHL gives older adults an opportunity to advocate for issues that matter to seniors across North Carolina. STHL members learn about legislative issues affecting older adults, educate their communities, and help bring the voices and concerns of older North Carolinians to policymakers.

- **Community Advisory Committees (CAC) -** CAC volunteers advocate for residents living in nursing homes and adult care homes. They visit facilities, learn about residents' rights and quality of care, and work alongside the Long-Term Care Ombudsman to help ensure residents have a voice and are treated with dignity and respect.

Whether you are passionate about advocating for older adults, supporting caregivers, protecting long-term care residents, or simply want to give back to your community, there is a place for you at ECCAAA.

If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities with ECCAAA, visit **Volunteer Opportunities – Eastern Carolina Council of Government** or call 252-638-3185.

ECCAAA: Bringing Knowledge to Our Communities

Did you know the Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging (ECCAAA) offers free educational presentations to community organizations, businesses, senior groups, caregivers, and professional teams throughout our region? Our presentations are designed to provide practical information, increase awareness of available resources, and help communities better understand the needs of older adults and caregivers. Topics include Dementia Awareness, Dementia Live, Elder Abuse, the Aging Network, Family Caregiver Support, Making Every Referral Count, and more. Whether you are looking for a presentation for your staff, community group, senior center, or organization, ECCAAA can help bring the information to you.

For further information on available educational presentations or to schedule a presentation contact:

January Brown
Interim AAA Director

252-638-3185 ext. 3011
jbrown@eccog.org

Or visit our website at:
TRAINING & EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS-AAA – Eastern Carolina Council of Government

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National Caregivers Month

November is National Family Caregivers Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the millions of family members, friends, and neighbors who provide unpaid care to older adults and individuals with disabilities. Caregiving is an act of love, but it can also be challenging. Family caregivers may help with medications, meals, transportation, personal care, household responsibilities, medical appointments, or simply provide companionship and emotional support. Many caregivers balance these responsibilities with jobs, children, and their own personal needs. During November, Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging encourages caregivers to remember that you do not have to do it alone. Resources are available to help caregivers find support, learn new skills, connect with services, and take much-needed breaks from their caregiving responsibilities.

The Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) helps eligible caregivers throughout our nine-county region, including information and assistance, education and training, support groups, respite opportunities, and other resources designed to strengthen caregivers and help them continue in their caregiving role. For information on events in your area during November and services, contact your local senior center. Most importantly, take time this month to recognize the caregiver in your life and if you are a caregiver, recognize yourself. Your time, patience, compassion, and dedication make a meaningful difference every day.

Thank you to all the caregivers across Eastern North Carolina for the important work you do. You are seen, you are valued, and you are appreciated.

Raising Awareness During Alzheimer's Awareness Month

November is Alzheimer's Awareness Month, a time to increase understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia and to recognize the individuals, families, and caregivers affected by these conditions. Alzheimer's is a progressive disease that affects memory, thinking, and behavior. While there are currently no cures, early detection, education, and access to support can make a meaningful difference for individuals and their families. Understanding that dementia is a disease not simply a normal part of aging can help reduce stigma and encourage people to seek help sooner.
For families living with dementia, caregiving can bring both meaningful moments and significant challenges. Connecting with resources, learning about the disease, planning, and building a strong support network can help families navigate the journey. During Alzheimer's Awareness Month, we encourage our communities to learn, listen, and support those affected by dementia. A little understanding and compassion can make a tremendous difference.

For further information and resources visit:

- ECCAAA Family Caregiver Support Program: **https://eccog.org/family-caregiver-support-program/**
- Dementia Alliance NC: **https://dementianc.org/**
- Alzheimer Association of America: **https://alzfdn.org/**
- Alzheimer's Society of America: **https://dementianc.org/**
- Alzheimer's Association: **https://www.alz.org/**

Wayne County Listening Session Helps Shape North Carolina's Aging Future

The North Carolina Division of Aging is hosting a series of listening sessions across the state to better understand the needs of older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers. These sessions are open to the public and provide an opportunity for individuals, families, service providers, and community partners to share their experiences and ideas. ECCAAA was pleased to participate in the Wayne County Listening Session on September 16, 2026, at Wayne County Services on Aging.

The session brought together members of the community to discuss the issues, challenges, and opportunities impacting older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers. Community input gathered through these listening sessions will help inform the 2027–2031 North Carolina State Aging Plan and assist in identifying priorities for the future of aging and disability services across North Carolina. ECCAAA is grateful to everyone who took the time to attend, listen, share their experiences, and contribute to this important conversation.



Your voice matters
&
your input helps shape the future of aging services in our state!

Making the Holidays Meaningful for Older Adults

The holiday season is often filled with family gatherings, traditions, and celebrations but for some older adults, this time of year can also bring loneliness, grief, or feelings of being disconnected. Changes in health, the loss of loved ones, living farther from family, or simply being unable to participate in familiar traditions can make the holidays especially difficult. This holiday season, take a moment to include the older adults in your life. A phone call, a visit, sharing a favorite meal, looking through old photographs, or inviting them to participate in a family tradition can make a meaningful difference. Remember that inclusion does not have to be complicated, sometimes simply spending time together is the greatest gift.

For older adults who may be experiencing loneliness or need additional support, there are community resources available, including senior centers, nutrition programs, transportation services, caregiver support, and social activities. At the Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging, we encourage everyone to make connection part of their holiday tradition. A little time, kindness, and companionship can help make the season brighter for an older adult in your community.

For information on resources for in your community and holiday events we encourage you to contact your local senior center.

For additional older adult and caregiver holiday resources visit:

- **Reducing Loneliness in Seniors During the Holidays - AgingCare.com**
- **Holiday Visits with Aging Loved Ones: Signs It's Time for Help**
- **Coping with Depression and the Holidays | American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry**
- **15 Fun Holiday Activities for Seniors | Caring Senior Service**
- **8 Tips for Supporting Aging Loved Ones During the Holidays-Bankers Life Blog**

Provider Highlights

Lenoir County Council on Aging-Building Connections Across Generations

Lenoir County Council on Aging (LCCOA) was proud to participate in the CTE Scholarship Internship Program during spring 2026, welcoming local high school students to gain hands-on work experience while supporting the senior center. Students from South Lenoir, North Lenoir, and Kinston High Schools applied for internship positions, with two students completing the January to May program. Their interests included nursing, social work, and social media, allowing them to explore potential careers while contributing their creativity, technology skills, and fresh perspectives to LCCOA.

One highlight was watching intern Davion grow in confidence while assisting with the PEAS program. What began as nervous phone calls developed into the ability to confidently explain the program, communicate with older adults, and complete outreach independently. The internship was about more than work experience but rather creating opportunities for older and younger generations to learn from one another. Students gained a deeper understanding of aging and community service, while older adults benefited from the energy and ideas of the next generation.

Because of the success of this partnership, LCCOA looks forward to welcoming new interns in spring 2027 and continuing to build meaningful connections across generations.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-CEDS

One of the functions that we carry out as part of that role is to create the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region.

2025 Annual Update to the 2023-2027 CEDS

2025 RESOLUTION to the 2023-2027 CEDS

As the Economic Development District (EDD), ECC can also assist communities and organizations in applying for EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs.

Economic Development:

ECC continues its EDA and CEDS responsibilities and received approximately $45,200 in EDA reimbursement during July. ECC will be eligible to apply for additional EDA funding in December 2026 for another two-year round.

NCDEQ Grant Management for North Carolina Coastal Federation

ECC will provide grant administration and subrecipient oversight for two projects being implemented by the North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) under ECC's NCDEQ grant agreement.

The projects have combined federal funding of $111,430 and with NCCFs required match, represent $214,430 in total project resources.

The projects include the Newport Regional Wetland Master Plan and Design, which provides $76,988 in federal funding with a $73,000 NCCF in-kind match, for total project resources of $149,988. The project will develop a regional stormwater solution for the Newport River Watershed and includes technical planning, engineering coordination, stakeholder engagement, environmental analysis, permitting, and development of a shovel-ready implementation plan.

The second project, the Coastal Leadership Institute to Strengthen Coastal Watershed Planning, provides $34,442 in federal funding with a $30,000 NCCF cash match, for total project resources of $64,442. The initiative will strengthen coastal watershed planning and water-quality leadership through curriculum development, recruitment, leadership sessions, scholarships, outreach, program evaluation, and alumni engagement.

As the grant administrator, ECC will provide financial and programmatic oversight of NCCF, including review of invoices and supporting expenditures, verification of required match, monitoring project milestones and deliverables, review of quarterly and final reports, processing eligible reimbursements, maintaining grant documentation, and ensuring compliance with NCDEQ, EPA, 2 CFR Part 200, audit, procurement, and other applicable federal and state requirements. ECC's monitoring responsibilities may include desk reviews, site visits, financial and programmatic monitoring, invoice and match review, and audit review. ECC is expected to earn $14,000 during the first year and $24,500 during the second year.

These projects expand ECC's role in grant management and regional environmental planning while supporting coastal resilience, water-quality planning, and local government leadership throughout eastern North Carolina.

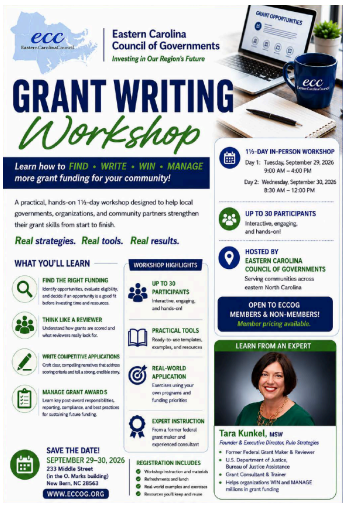
ECC Serves as the Local Development District (LDD) for Our 9-County Region for the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission

The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC), is an economic development partnership agency of the federal government and seven state governments.

ECC is the designated Local Development District (LDD) representative for the Southeastern Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) and assists local governments apply for SCRC funds.

BLUE PRINT PROJECT

ECC initiated coordination with the Town of Swansboro and Town of Peletier related to the North Carolina Flood Resiliency Blueprint. ECC developed kickoff materials and project-prioritization approaches to assist the communities in identifying resilience needs, infrastructure vulnerabilities, potential projects, and funding opportunities.



ECC hosted a Grant Writing Workshop

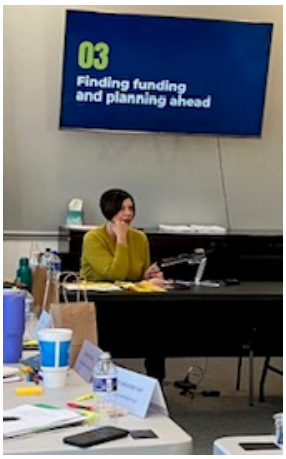
ECC and Tara Kunkel, founder & Executive Director, Rulo Strategies provided a Grant Writing Workshop on September 29th & 30th.

Tara Kunkel instructed the class (12 participants and 3 staff members) on how to find the right funding, think like a reviewer, write competitive applications, and manage grant awards.

Her expert instruction enhances participants' ability to assist their communities by addressing key concerns and submitting competitive grant applications.













For more information about economic development, U.S. Economic Development Administration (US EDA), or Southeastern Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC),
contact ECC Interim Executive Director, David Rosado at 252-638-3185, ext. 3013

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES



- **FERRY TOLLING UPDATES**



DERPO MEETINGS: 10 AM

TCC-NOVEMBER 17, 2026

TAC-NOVEMBER 24, 2026

233 Middle St New Bern NC

Community Planning Services

ECC's Planning Department offers a variety of land use planning services in the nine-county region. Planning staff advises local governments on current planning issues such as zoning, annexation, ordinance revisions and related land-use issues. Staff also draws on expertise in such areas as the environment, transportation and strategic planning to assist local governments as requested. This work includes:

- Ordinance Development and Updates (such as 160D Updates, UDOs, Zoning, Subdivision, Historic Preservation, Public Nuisances, Minimum Housing, Flood Damage Prevention, and other codes)
- Plans (such as Comprehensive, Land Use, Bicycle/Pedestrian)
- Performing Administrative Services such as Zoning Enforcement and Planning Board / Board of Adjustment meeting support, primarily for municipalities with limited staff
- Planning Board / Board of Adjustment Training
- GIS Mapping

Rural Transportation Planning Organization (RPO)

Eastern Carolina Council is the lead planning agency for the Down East Rural Transportation Planning Organization (DERPO)



DERPO Serves:

- Carteret County
- Jones County
- Pamlico County

For more information about Community Planning Services or the Rural Transportation Planning Organization, contact, Carlton Gideon at 252-638-3185, ext. 3018

ECC Members & Representatives

Carteret County

Town of Atlantic Beach -John O'Daniel
Town of Beaufort - Paula Gillikin
Town of Bogue - Barbara Owens
Town of Emerald Isle -Alesia Sanderson
Town of Indian Beach - Ryan Kelley
Town of Morehead City William Taylor
Town of Peletier - Bea Cunningham

Craven County

Town of Bridgeton - Paul Tremblay
Town of Dover - Randy Mitchell
Town of River Bend - Patty Leonard
Town of Trent Woods - Shane Turney
Town of Vanceboro - Todd McMillen

Duplin County

Town of Beulaville - Hutch Jones
Town of Calypso - Rubylene Lambert
Town of Greenevers - Diane Brown
Town of Kenansville - Linda Tyson
Town of Magnolia - Charles Banks
Town of Rose Hill - Angela Smith
Town of Teachey - Patrick Williams

Greene County

Town of Snow Hill - Lorrine Washington
Town of Walstonburg - Ronald Turner

Jones County

Jones County -Frank Emory
Town of Maysville - Janet Baker
Town of Pollocksville - Maria Robles

Lenoir County

Town of Pink Hill - Lauren Smith

Onslow County

City of Jacksonville - Cindy Edwards
Town of North Topsail Beach - Pending
Town of Richlands - McKinley Smith

Pamlico County

Pamlico County - Edward Riggs, Jr.
Town of Alliance - Linda Marshall
Town of Grantsboro - Kristie Mitchell
Town of Mesic - Lois Credle
Town of Minnesott Beach - Carol DeMoranville
Town of Oriental - Paul Jordan II

Wayne County

Town of Eureka - Pending
Town of Pikeville -Pending

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