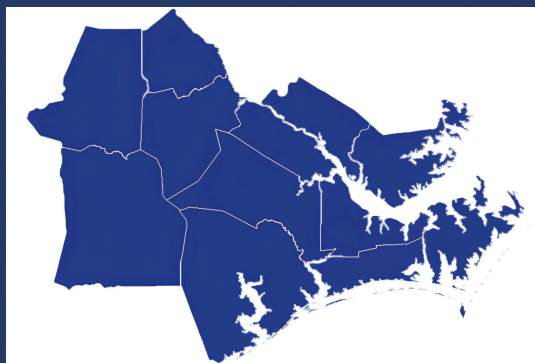




Eastern Carolina Council

2025-2026

Annual Report



PO Box 1717, New Bern, NC 28563

233 Middle Street, Suite 300, New Bern, NC 28560

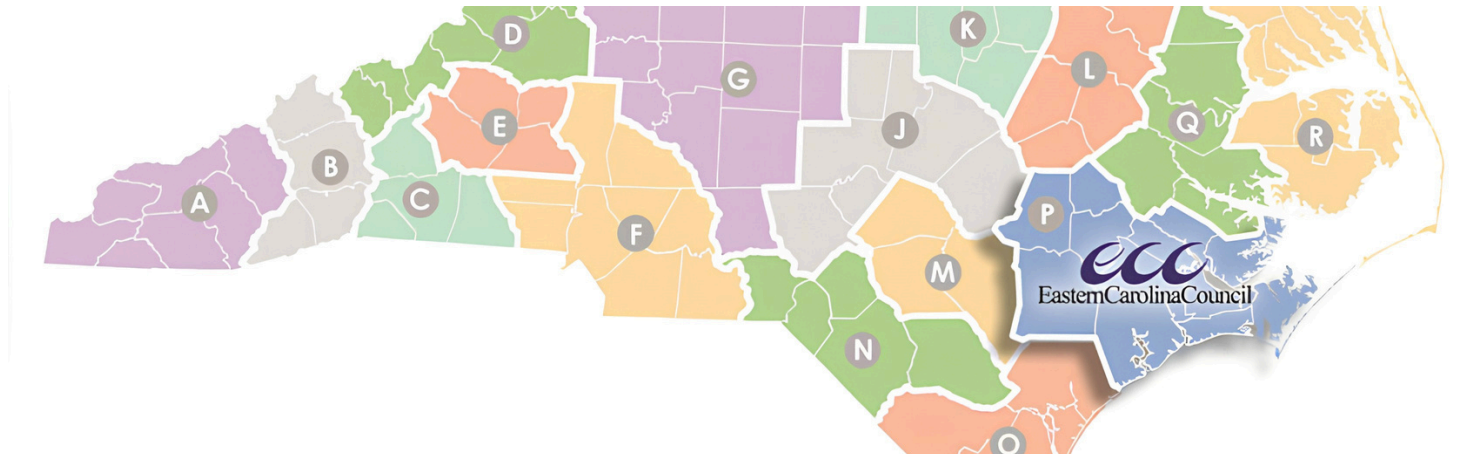
252-638-3185

www.eccog.org

ECC is one of sixteen councils of government in North Carolina.

The Eastern Carolina Council (ECC) is a multi-county, local government, planning and development organization.

These councils are forums where local officials determine priorities for the larger area in which their communities are an integral part.



ECC serves a region with a land mass of 5,710 square miles and a population of over 652,000 in the region's nine counties Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico and Wayne.

Mission Statement:

The Eastern Carolina Council's mission is to improve the region's quality of life by providing planning, economic development and senior services to local governments and area residents by maximizing resources and collaborating regionally.

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.

ECC is a conduit between local governments in our region and state/federal partners. ECC's Area Agency on Aging Department plans and administers a variety of federal, state, and local programs and services primarily targeted at supporting aging adults and their caregivers. ECC's Planning and Economic Development Department provides professional planning, economic, and community development services to member governments and partners at the local and regional levels. We provide technical assistance to local governments and administer projects and programs which benefit our region's citizens.

Board President Message



It is my privilege to reflect on another meaningful year at ECC. As we look back on FY 2025-2026, I am filled with gratitude for the many people who make our organization's work possible and optimism for the opportunities ahead.

This year, ECC continued to demonstrate what can be accomplished when dedicated staff, committed volunteers, generous supporters, and community partners come together around a shared purpose. Through both challenges and successes, our organization remained focused on serving our community, strengthening relationships, and making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.

As Board President, I am especially proud of the commitment and leadership demonstrated by our staff. Their energy, creativity, and determination have helped ECC continue moving forward while remaining true to our mission and values. None of this would be possible without their dedication.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to our volunteers, partners, and supporters. Your confidence in ECC and your willingness to invest your time, resources, and expertise are essential to our success. Every contribution large or small helps us build a stronger organization and a stronger community.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you and recognize our Governing Board and Member Governments. Our Board has devoted a lot of time to ensuring ECC's success over this past year and is dedicated to its future. The commitment these elected officials have to their constituents, communities, and our region should never go unnoticed.

The year ahead brings new possibilities. We will continue building on the progress of FY 2025-2026, embracing opportunities to grow our impact, deepen our partnerships, and ensure that ECC is well positioned to meet the needs of our community.

Thank you for being part of the ECC family and for believing in the work we do together. I look forward to all that we will accomplish in the coming year.

With gratitude and optimism,

Ed Riggs, Jr.
ECC Board President



Executive Director Message



Fiscal Year 2025-2026 represents an important year of progress, renewal, and opportunity for the Eastern Carolina Council (ECC). Through the dedication of our staff, the leadership of our Board of Directors, and the continued support of our regional partners, ECC has strengthened its foundation and positioned itself for a promising future.

Throughout this fiscal year, our team remained focused on strengthening financial oversight, enhancing accountability and compliance, improving grant administration, and building stronger relationships with our member governments, funding agencies, and community partners. These efforts reflect our commitment to being a responsive, responsible, and trusted regional organization.

Equally important, ECC continued moving our regional mission forward. From economic development and transportation planning to aging services, broadband and digital inclusion, community planning, and regional partnerships, our staff remained committed to delivering programs and services that make a meaningful difference throughout eastern North Carolina.

I am grateful to the ECC Board of Directors and Executive Committee for their leadership, guidance, and commitment to the organization. I am especially proud of our employees, whose professionalism, perseverance, and dedication to public service have been at the heart of our progress. Their commitment demonstrates what can be accomplished when we work together with a shared purpose and a common vision for our region.

As we look to the future, we do so with renewed confidence and optimism. ECC is building upon a strong foundation of accountability, integrity, collaboration, and service. Together with our member governments and regional partners, we look forward to creating new opportunities, strengthening our communities, and continuing to make eastern North Carolina an even better place to live, work, and thrive.

Thank you for your continued trust, partnership, and support of the Eastern Carolina Council. We look forward to the opportunities ahead and to continuing this important work together.

Sincerely,

David Rosado
Interim Executive Director



Area Agency on Aging

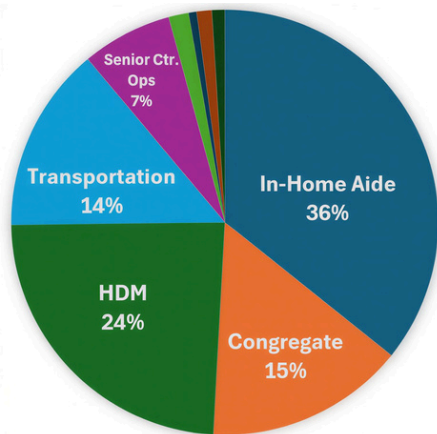
The Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging (ECC AAA) is one of 16 Area Agencies on Aging in North Carolina.

Formally established in 1973 by way of the Older Americans Act, the Area Agency on Aging has served as the local leader on aging by planning, developing, funding, and implementation of local systems of coordinated aging and other home and community-based services intended to help vulnerable older adults to live with independence and dignity in their homes as long as possible.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The ECC AAA 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.

Top four funded programs in our region during FY 25-26:



FY 2025-2026 regional funding distribution highlights regional providers commitment to supporting services that enable older adults to age safely in their homes and communities. In-Home Aide services received the greatest share of funding, followed by Home Delivered Meals, Congregate Nutrition, Transportation, and Senior Center Operations. Together, these five services accounted for the majority of regional expenditures which reflects the ongoing demand for personal care, nutrition programs, and transportation assistance. Other funded services include Care Management, Group Respite, and Senior Companion. These core services play a vital role in promoting independence, reducing isolation, and supporting the health of older adults across the region.



In-Home Aide

Number of Hours: 72,442
Clients Served: 491



Home Delivered Meals

Number of Meals: 150,531
Clients Served: 946



Congregate Meal Services

Number of Meals: 87,389
Clients Served: 1,665



Transportation

Number of Trips: 37,599
Clients Served: 299

Home Community Care Block Grant

HCCBG Funded Agencies:

Carteret County

*Carteret County DSS
Carteret Senior Services
Coastal Community Action, Inc.*

Craven County

*Craven County DSS
Havelock Senior Center*

Duplin County

Duplin Services for the Aged

Greene County

*Greene County Senior Services
Greene County DSS*

Jones County

Jones County DSS

Lenoir County

Lenoir County Council on Aging, Inc.

Onslow County

Onslow County Senior Services

Pamlico County

*Pamlico County DSS
Pamlico Senior Services*

Wayne County

*Wayne County Services On Aging
Wayne Action Group for Economic
Solvency, Inc. (WAGES)*

For Grant Year 2025–2026, ECCAAA received a regional allocation of \$4,313,132 from the NC Division of Aging through the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG). The HCCBG is comprised of funding from the Older Americans Act, the Social Services Block Grant in support of respite care, portions of State In-Home and Adult Day Care funds, and other applicable state appropriations. The distribution of federal and state funds is based on county population data using a formula that incorporates the following factors and weights:

- 50% on the number of persons 60 years of age and older
- 30% on the number of persons 60 and older who live at or below poverty
- 10% on the number of non-white persons 60 and older
- 10% on the number of 60 and older who live in rural areas

The allocation formula was developed to meet the requirements of the Older Americans Act, a primary funding source of the HCCBG, by taking into consideration: (1) the geographic distribution of older adults and (2) the emphasis placed on serving individuals with the greatest economic and social needs. As a result, county allocation amounts may fluctuate from year to year based on changes in demographic data and overall funding levels. The HCCBG includes 18 fundable service categories designed to help older adults remain safely and independently in their homes and communities for as long as possible, thereby reducing the risk of premature institutionalization. Each county determines how its annual allocation will be distributed among eligible services based on recommendations from the local Aging Planning Committee and approval by the County Commissioners. These funding decisions are intended to address the most pressing needs of older adults within the community.

HCCBG Services Funded in Region P

- Senior Center Operations
- Transportation Services
- Senior Companion
- Home Delivered Meals
- Congregate Meals
- In-Home Aide
- Group Respite

Family Caregiver Support Program



Regional Provider Services

Service	Clients	Units
Respite Care	16	2854
Equipment	4	27
Incontinence Supplies	11	671
Liquid Nutrition	13	1907
Home Modifications	1	2
Support Groups	29	153
Safety alert systems	1	3

The Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) helps family members and other informal caregivers continue caring for their loved ones at home and in the community. Through partnerships with local providers, the program offers information and assistance, caregiver education, counseling, support groups, respite care, and supplemental services designed to reduce caregiver burden and improve caregiver well-being. By connecting caregivers with resources and support, the program helps strengthen caregiving families, enhances quality of life, and enables older adults and individuals with disabilities to remain safely in their homes for as long as possible. During FY 2025-2026 ECCAAA provided training, one-on-one client assistance, educational presentations, technical support, trained two Area Agencies on Aging on the ECCAAA First Responder Training program, and oversaw the case management for the New Bern Project Lifesaver Program.

ECCAAA FCSP Regional Data

Educational Sessions	80
First Responder/ CIT Training	15
Dementia Live Simulations	21
Caregiver Assistance	1093





Regional Digital Navigator Program

ECCAAA employed a Regional Digital Navigator through the NC Division of Aging Digital Navigator Grant to oversee program activities and support implementation throughout the region. Through partnerships with senior centers, libraries, housing providers, and community organizations, the program provided digital skills training, device assistance, and individualized support to help older adults improve technology access, increase confidence, and enhance their ability to remain connected and independent. Everyone deserves to feel connected, supported, and valued. Through the Digital Navigator Program older adults were provided with valuable training to stay connected to their communities. The ECCAAA Digital Navigator program concluded November 2025.

Digital Navigator Activities

Community Trainings	40
Client Assistance	154
Client Referrals	37
Providers Assistance	18
Stakeholder Meetings	84



Evidence Based Health Promotions

Evidence-Based Health Promotion (EBHP) programs are research-tested interventions designed to improve the health, wellness, and independence of older adults. These programs have been proven to help participants increase physical activity, reduce the risk of falls, manage chronic conditions, strengthen caregiver skills, and improve overall quality of life while supporting individuals in remaining healthy and independent in their homes and communities.

ECCAAA continues to support the goals of Healthy Aging NC by expanding access to evidence-based programs that promote healthy lifestyles, disease prevention, and social engagement. Through partnerships with local senior centers, older adults and caregivers throughout the region participated in a variety of evidence-based programs. Programs include Bingocize®, Tai Chi, Powerful Tools for Caregivers, the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, and A Matter of Balance. These programs encourage regular physical activity, increase confidence in managing health and caregiving responsibilities, reduce social isolation, and empower participants to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

By investing in evidence-based health promotion programming, ECCAAA providers are helping older adults and caregivers age safely, remain active and engaged, and maintain their independence, therefore; advancing the vision of Healthy Aging NC and creating healthier communities.

Evidence Based Health Promotion Regional Data

Number of Classes Held	38
Number of Participants	982

Special Grant Opportunities

Choosing Home Grant

Choosing Home Regional Data

Number of Clients	73
Number of Projects	74

The Choosing Home Program was established to help older adults remain safely and independently in their homes by addressing housing-related needs that may have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funded through the American Rescue Plan Act and administered by the North Carolina Division of Aging through the state's Area Agencies on Aging, the program provides flexible assistance to support aging in place.

The program serves North Carolinians age 60 and older who are at risk of housing instability or institutional care by providing assistance with home repairs, accessibility modifications, safety improvements, household necessities, and certain housing-related expenses.

In FY 2025-2026, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh, New Bern office provided assistance to older adults in Carteret, Craven, Jones, Lenoir, and Onslow Counties to identify eligible individuals, coordinate services, and remove barriers that threaten their ability to remain safely at home. The Choosing Home Program, continues to promote independence, enhance quality of life, and support North Carolina's commitment to remove barriers that threaten an individual's ability to remain at home safely and independently. The program grant will conclude June 30, 2027.

Providing Elderly Additional Sustenance Program Grant (PEAS)



The Providing Elderly Additional Sustenance (PEAS) Program is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act and administered through North Carolina's Area Agencies on Aging to address food insecurity among older adults. The program provides eligible adults age 60 and older with additional home-delivered meals or nutritious food boxes to support healthy aging and independent living.

During FY 25-26, ECCAAA partnered with Greene County Senior Center, Jones County Senior Services, Lenoir County Council on Aging, and WAGES in Goldsboro to implement the program. Since its launch in November 2025, 134 older adults received assistance, including 157 home-delivered meals and 422 food boxes. The program operated in Greene, Jones, and Lenoir Counties during FY 2025-2026 and will expand to Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico, and Wayne Counties in FY 2026-2027, increasing access to nutrition services for older adults throughout the region. The program will conclude on June 30, 2027.

For additional information on AAA Programs,
contact ECC Interim AAA Director January Brown at 252-365-3185 ext 3011

PEAS Regional Data

Number of Clients	43
Meal Boxes	531
Additional Meals	168

Senior Centers Today

Since the birth of the first senior center in New York City in 1943, senior centers have continuously evolved to meet the needs of the older adults by providing valuable programs, services, and activities. The senior of yester-year is not too much different than the senior of today when it comes to seeking a place to socialize, find assistance, or just to eat a balanced meal. Today, our senior centers are a part of a much broader network providing vital long term services and support to older adults and adults with disabilities so that they can live in their homes and participate in their communities for as long as possible.

In North Carolina there are 170 senior centers with 10 located right here in our region, offering a variety of programs, services, and activities in order to engage older adults as well as help maintain their independence. The centers offer a variety of programs and choose which programs to fund based on the needs of the community. Below are programs that are typically offered in the senior centers within our region:

- Nutritional Programs
- Transportation
- In Home Aide Services
- Technology Literacy
- Adult Basic Education
- Durable Medical Equipment Lending
- Information, Referral, and Case Assistance
- Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) and counseling
- Legal Assistance
- Family Caregiver Support
- Nutritional Supplements
- Fitness programs
- Support Groups
- Adult Day Care
- Group Respite
- Evidenced Based Health Promotion Programs



Region P Senior Centers

Carteret County Senior
Services



Craven County Senior
Services

Havelock Senior
Services



Duplin County Senior
Services

Greene County Senior
Services



Jones County Senior
Services

Lenoir County
Council on Aging



Onslow County Senior
Services



Pamlico County Senior
Services



Wayne County
Service on Aging



Ombudsman Program

Long Term Care Ombudsman Data

Visits to LTC Facilities	691
Facility In-Services	19
Community Education Events	47
Technical Assistance	1171
Complaints	212
Cases	95

Long-Term Care Ombudsmen are advocates for residents living in long-term care facilities. They investigate and resolve complaints, advocate for improvements in the long-term care system, and work closely with Community Advisory Committees (CACs) to serve as a vital link between local communities and long-term care facilities. In addition, Ombudsmen mediate disputes, provide technical assistance to facility staff and residents, promote elder abuse prevention and awareness, and deliver educational presentations in the community. The Ombudsman Program also trains, supports, and oversees thirteen Community Advisory Committees comprised of 33 dedicated volunteers who help monitor conditions and advocate for the rights and well-being of residents throughout the region.

Region P Long Term Care Facilities

Regional Bed Total	5,463
Nursing Homes	23
Adult Care Homes	40
Family Care Homes	28

ECCAAA 2026 SARA JO JACKSON AWARD

Each year, ECCAAA presents the Sara Jo Jackson Award to a Community Advisory Committee member who demonstrates exceptional dedication to residents of long-term care facilities and the community. On April 24, 2026, ECCAAA proudly recognized Mr. Malcolm Bates of the Duplin Adult Care Community Advisory Committee as the 2026 recipient. Since 2014, Mr. Bates has served Duplin County with compassion, integrity, and unwavering commitment. His outstanding advocacy and service have made a lasting impact on residents and the community, exemplifying the spirit of the Sara Jo Jackson Award. Congratulations to Mr. Bates on this well-deserved recognition and for his years of service in advocating for individuals in long-term care settings.

Community Advisory Committee Volunteers

Volunteers	33
Hours Served	764
Miles Driven	6,638

OMBUDSMAN INTERNSHIP

For the past 12 years, the Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging has partnered with the East Carolina University School of Social Work to provide field education opportunities for student interns. During Spring 2026, ECCAAA welcomed Laci Thomas, a Master of Social Work student, as an intern with the Ombudsman Program. Throughout her internship, Laci gained hands-on experience in long-term care advocacy, volunteer education, resident rights, and long-term care regulations while making valuable contributions to the program. ECCAAA appreciates Laci's dedication and is proud to support the next generation of professionals serving older adults.

For more program information, contact ECC Lead Ombudsman Angelia Pridgen at 252-638-3185 ext 3007

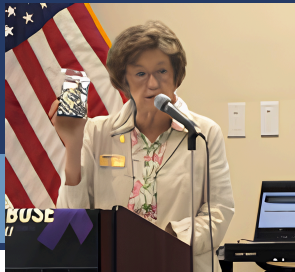
Regional Elder Abuse Awareness



Throughout FY 2025–2026, Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging partnered with senior centers, departments of social services, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and community organizations to raise awareness of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation across Region P. During North Carolina's Elder Abuse Awareness Month and World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15, 2026), communities throughout the region hosted educational events, resource fairs, and outreach activities to promote the recognition, prevention, and reporting of elder abuse. ECCAAA staff provided educational presentations, distributed educational materials, shared available resources, and encouraged community members to help protect the rights, safety, and dignity of older adults. These efforts reflect ECCAAA's ongoing commitment to educating the public, strengthening community partnerships, and advocating for older adults throughout the region.

Regional Data

Presentations	22
Fraud Events	5
Awareness Walks	2
Long-term Care Resident Rights training	14



Wayne County Elder Abuse, Scam & Fraud Awareness Symposium

ECCAAA would like to recognize Wayne County Services on Aging for hosting its annual Elder Abuse, Scam & Fraud Awareness Symposium on June 9, 2026, at the Peggy M. Seegars Senior Center in Goldsboro in observance of World Elder Abuse Awareness Month. The symposium featured North Carolina Secretary of State Elaine F. Marshall, who educated attendees on investment, charity, trademark, medication, and notary fraud. She shared practical strategies to help older adults recognize scams and financial exploitation while emphasizing the importance of reporting suspected fraud. Secretary Marshall encouraged attendees to report any suspicious activity, stating, "I would rather receive 99 calls of potential fraud that didn't lead to anything than receive only one that did." ECCAAA Lead Ombudsman Angelia Pridgen also presented information on recognizing and reporting elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, stressing the importance of safeguarding personal and financial information and never sharing banking or other sensitive information with unknown individuals.

The symposium reinforced the importance of year-round education and community collaboration to prevent elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, and fraud. Through events like this, ECCAAA and its partners continue to raise awareness and empower older adults with the knowledge and resources needed to protect themselves and maintain their independence.



Local Government Services

Eastern Carolina Council's (ECC) Local Government Services provides transportation planning and community development services, along with technical assistance to local governments within the nine-county region.

Community Planning Services:

ECC has offered a variety of land-use planning services, which include advising local governments on issues such as:

- ZONING
- SUBDIVISIONS
- FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION
- ANNEXATIONS
- ORDINANCE REVISIONS



- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Technical Assistance:
ECC completed providing technical assistance to numerous towns for ARPA-related matters, including policies, program deadlines, and reporting requirements.
- Comprehensive Land Use Planning:
Provided to the Towns of Peletier and Pikeville. The Town of Peletier land use plan was completed and certified by the Division of Coastal Management for Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) compliance.
- General Technical Services / Ordinance Updates:
Subdivision Administration – Services available to the Town of Vanceboro.
Ordinance Development – Provided subdivision ordinance development services to the Town of Greenevers.
- Zoning Administration:
Added Certified Zoning Official (CZO) expertise to enhance technical assistance available to local governments on zoning administration, development review, and land use regulations.

Staff provides training for:

- PLANNING BOARDS
- BOARDS OF ADJUSTMENT
- GOVERNING BOARDS



- ECC Hosted Ethics Training for Elected Officials:
ECC partnered with Attorney Trey Ferguson of Sumrell Sugg to provide the required ethics training for newly-elected and re-elected local government officials.
- ECC Orientation:
ECC provided an orientation for new members to familiarize them with the organization's mission, operations, and board responsibilities.
- Planning Administration: Provided to the Towns of Bridgeton and Peletier.

Grantsmanship: FY 2025-26

- Town of Warsaw – ECC assisted the Town of Warsaw with a PARTF grant application.

- Town of Pikeville: ECC partnered with Sounds Rivers on a Land and Water Fund grant proposal for the town of Pikeville.
- Town of Beulaville: ECC continues to assist the Town of Beulaville with administration of a Parks & Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant.
 - 205j water quality planning grants – ECC submitted four 205j grant applications. Two proposals, both in partnership with North Carolina Coastal Federation, were awarded. ECC is providing grant administration for both projects.

Transportation Planning



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

The four primary duties for RPOs include:

- Develop comprehensive transportation plans and other long-range transportation plans in cooperation with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).
- Provide a forum for public participation in the transportation planning process.
- Develop and prioritize suggestions for transportation projects to include in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
- Provide transportation-related information to local governments and other interested organizations.

Transportation Project Prioritization

Required for the NCDOT, the STIP is a 10-year planning document that details transportation project funding and scheduling across the entire state. Strategic Prioritization (prioritization) is the formal process for developing the STIP. NCDOT is currently working through Prioritization 8.0, the eighth iteration of this process. DERPO submitted numerous projects for the latest round of prioritization and is assisting with local input.



Comprehensive Transportation Planning

DERPO initiated the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for Carteret County, which was recently completed. A CTP is a long-range document, typically considering a period of 20 to 30 years, that identifies a jurisdiction's transportation needs across various modes (highway, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and rail). The geographic scope is local, such as one or more counties. The Carteret County CTP, adopted in April 2026, identifies transportation needs and provides recommendations for a 25-year timeframe.

For more information, contact ECC Community Planner Carlton Gideon at 252-638-3185 ext 3018

Economic Development

EDA Supports ECC's Economic Development Work

Eastern Carolina Council (ECC) serves as the Economic Development District (EDD) for the US Economic Development Administration (EDA).

ECC receives EDA Partnership Planning grant funds to support this work.

A 3-year award for this funding was applied for and received in 2024 -25 & continues thru 2026-27.

Maintenance of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) economic development plan and working on the goals from the CEDS is part of this work.

<https://eccog.org/economic-development-planning/>

ECC continues implementation of the 2023–2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) by advancing projects aligned with regional priorities, including infrastructure, workforce development, resiliency, housing, and economic competitiveness. Through its Economic Development District (EDD), ECC assists communities with project development and preparing CEDS consistency documentation for grant applications.

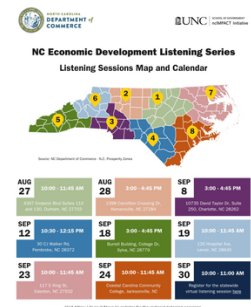
ECC serves the region as the Local Development District (LDD) for the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC). The SCRC is a federal-state partnership that promotes and encourages economic development in portions of AL, GA, MS, NC, SC, VA, and all of the state of FL. Modeled after the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), SRC targets new resources to support basic infrastructure, business development, natural resources, and workforce development.



The Commission's mission is to help create jobs, build communities and improve the lives of those who reside in the 408 counties (69 in NC). As the LDD, ECC's role is to assist local governments in our region to apply for SCRC/ other federal funding and provide related programs. ECC receives SCRC grant funds to support this work.

North Carolina Department of Commerce has contracted the University of North Carolina School of Government's nclMPACT Initiative to assist in the development of the state's 2026 Comprehensive Strategic Economic Development Plan (CEDS).

Eight regional listening sessions and one virtual statewide webinar designed to gather public input on regional strengths, challenges, and opportunities related to economic development were held. Insights gained from these listening sessions will be analyzed and used to inform the planning process for the Plan.





ECC developed a new working partnership with the Recovery Alliance Initiative (RAI) to address regional workforce, housing, transportation, and substance use disorder challenges through collaborative planning.



ECC completed a comprehensive regional Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Needs and Gaps Assessment in partnership with the Recovery Alliance Initiative (RAI) and JG Research & Evaluation (JGRE), utilizing the Calculating an Adequate System Tool (CAST) methodology to provide county-level data for Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico, and Wayne counties.

The project established a baseline of behavioral health services, treatment capacity, community needs, and system gaps, providing member governments and regional partners with data-driven insights to guide strategic planning, prioritize investments, funding opportunities, and strengthen collaboration to improve systems of care across Eastern North Carolina.



EDA Grant Assistance for NC Coastal Federation/ NC Aquaculture Hub

ECC continued serving as the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant manager for the North Carolina Coastal Federation's Aquaculture Shellfish Mariculture Hub in Carteret County. Supported through funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Golden LEAF Foundation, the project is the first facility of its kind in North Carolina.

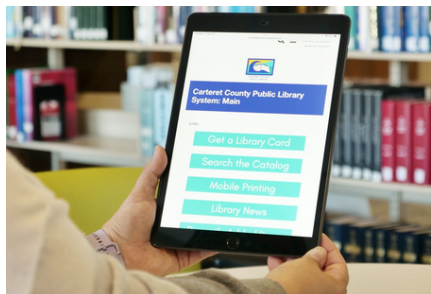
Once completed, the hub will provide shellfish growers with shared working waterfront access, cold storage, processing space, specialized equipment, and logistics support resources that are often beyond the reach of individual producers. By reducing operating costs, improving product handling, and increasing market access, the facility is expected to strengthen the region's shellfish aquaculture industry, create jobs, increase incomes for coastal businesses, and position Eastern North Carolina as a leader in the growing Blue Economy. Project completion is anticipated in late 2026 or early 2027.

ECC joined project partners and state leaders, including Senator Norman Sanderson, Representative Celeste Cairns, Golden LEAF Foundation President and CEO Scott Hamilton, and North Carolina Shellfish Growers Association President Chris Matteo, at the May 2026 groundbreaking ceremony, celebrating a milestone in a project expected to help grow North Carolina's oyster industry into a \$100 million sector by 2030.

ECC is the grant administrator for this ongoing grant.



Digital Inclusion Initiative



Eastern Carolina Council, in partnership with North Carolina State University Institute for Emerging Issues (NCSU IEI) and the Friday Institute (NCSU FI), Developed and completed Digital Equity Plans for all nine counties in the Eastern Carolina region, thus, creating county-specific roadmaps to expand broadband access, improve digital literacy, reduce the digital divide, and strengthen workforce and economic development opportunities.

Next, ECC assisted the regional implementation of the Digital Inclusion Initiative by providing implementation funding to each of the 9-counties in the amount of \$7,500.00. ECC communicated with leadership within each county seeking input on how each county would like to utilize the funding for its plan. As a result, ECC engaged in partnership with East Carolina University's (ECU) Link and Learn program to serve Carteret, Craven, Duplin counties and Eastern Carolina Workforce Development, Inc. (ECWD) to serve Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico, and Wayne. Greene and Jones counties used the implementation funds directly to existing county programs.



NC STATE UNIVERSITY
Institute for
Emerging Issues



Improving access to digital technology and literacy.



Administrative Assistance

Ethics for North Carolina
Elected Government Officials
March 19, 2026



A presentation for: Eastern Carolina Council

SumrellSugg
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

- Ethics Training for Newly Elected and Re-Elected Local Officials
- Employment Searches - ECC can assist local governments with employment searches
- Retreat Facilitation - ECC can facilitate a board and strategic planning retreat for your town

For more information, contact ECC Interim Executive Director David Rosado at 252-638-3185 ext 3013

Finance

FY 25-26 Projected Revenues

Federal Grants	\$3,695,927
State Grants	\$2,315,124
Contract Services	\$492,807



2025-2026

****Human Services percentage does not include \$4,171,864 (HCCBG Pass Thru Funds)**

Department	Total Expenses	%
General Government	\$317,006	12%
Transportation	\$313,899	12%
Economic Development	\$201,690	8%
Environmental Protection	\$289,141	11%
Area Agency on Aging**	\$1,517,443	57%
Total	\$2,639,179	100%

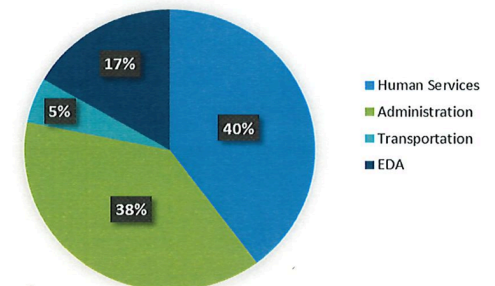
Revenue Budgeted FY 25-26

General-Other	\$317,006
Economic Development	\$201,690
Aging/Human Services	\$5,689,306
Planning Services	\$289,141
Transportation	\$313,900
Total	\$6,811,043

Source	Total Revenues	%
Federal	\$3,695,927	54%
State	\$2,315,124	34%
Local Dues	\$302,685	4%
T/A Contracts	\$492,807	7%
Other	\$4,500	1%
Total	\$6,811,043	100%

PROJECTED MEMBER DUES & REQUIRED MATCH

Projected Member Dues \$302,685



ECC Staff

Administration

David Rosado - Interim Executive Director

Susan Wolf - Administrative Assistant



Finance

Carol Bell - Finance Director

Kim Baker - Finance Specialist



Community & Transportation Planning

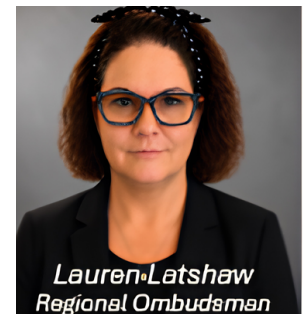
Carlton Gideon



Ombudsman

Angelia Pridgen - Lead Ombudsman

Lauren Latshaw - Ombudsman



Area Agency on Aging

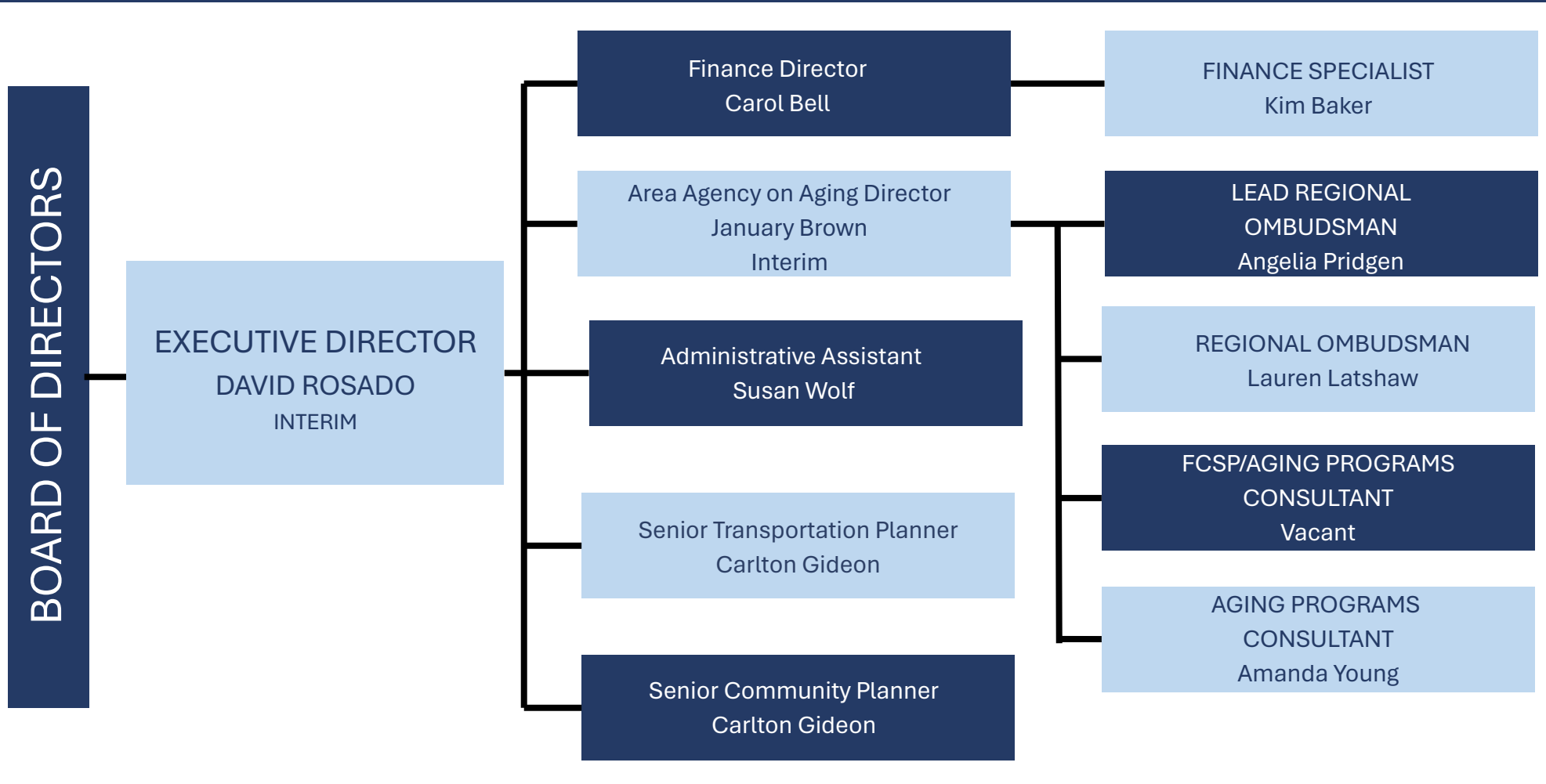
January Brown - Interim AAA Director

Amanda Young - Program Consultant



Eastern Carolina Council

2026- 2027 Organizational Chart



ECC General Membership Board / Executive Committee

About the Board

ECC is governed by a General Membership Board and an Executive Committee.

The General Membership Board includes one County Commissioner from each member county and one representative from each municipality served by the organization.

The ECC Executive Committee includes the County Commissioner delegate from each of the counties, one municipal representative from each county, and elected delegates from municipalities with a population of 16,000 or more.

The Executive Committee conducts business for the organization in months that the General Membership Board does not meet.

Officers:

Ed Riggs, Jr.—President

Frank Emory— 1st Vice President

Lorraine Washington— 2nd Vice President

Cindy Edwards— Treasurer

Carteret County

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

Craven County

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

Duplin County

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

Greene County:

Lorraine Washington – Town of Snow Hill*
Ronald Turner - Town of Waltsonburg

Jones County

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

Lenoir County

Lauren Smith - Town of Pink Hill*

Onslow County

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

Pamlico County

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

Wayne County

Pending - Town of Eureka**
Pending - Town of Pikeville**

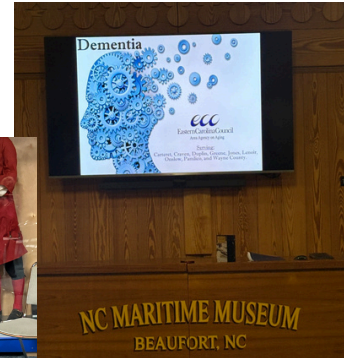
County Manager Representative

Mark Brewington – Pamlico County Manager*

* Denotes members of the Executive Committee
**Denotes Pending Seat

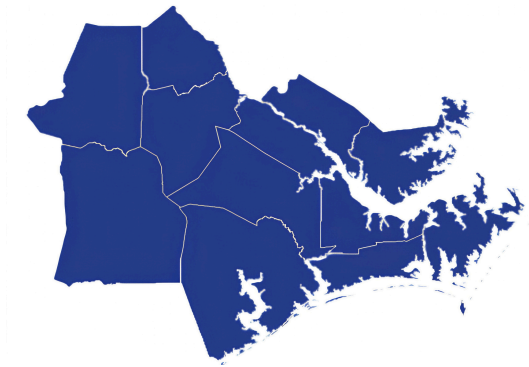
ECC is grateful for the continued dedication of the General Membership Board and the Executive Committee Board.

Pictures from the Year



2025-2026





PO Box 1717, New Bern, NC 28563

233 Middle Street, Suite 300, New Bern, NC 28560

252-638-3185

www.eccog.org