



**Executive Committee
March 23, 2022
Remote Meeting via Zoom**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order (11:00am)

2. Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda items are considered routine and noncontroversial in nature, and are considered and approved by a single motion and vote. If any member of the Executive Committee requests an item be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration and action that item will be placed under the Business, Updates and Discussion section of the agenda.

- A. February 23, 2022 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
- B. Budget Amendment #6

3. New Business

- A. Waste Reduction Partners Staff Salary Adjustment
- B. FY 2022 Public Transportation Program Resolution
- C. Economic & Community Development Staff Salary Adjustment
- D. Healthy Opportunities update

4. Other Items

- A. Executive Director Report

6. Adjournment

**Land of Sky Regional Council
Executive Committee
Regular Meeting
February 23, 2022**

Minutes

Land of Sky Regional Council's Executive Committee held a meeting through the Zoom platform on Wednesday, February 23, 2022. Executive Committee members participating in the meeting included Chair Barbara Volk, Bob Tomasulo, Preston Blakely, and Patrick Fitzsimmons, constituting a quorum.

Land of Sky staff participating in the meeting included Nathan Ramsey, Danna Stansbury, Glenda Brown, Erica Anderson, Charlotte Sullivan, LeeAnne Tucker, and Vicki Jennings, Tristan Winkler, Christina Giles (Zoom Host), and Zia Rifkin (Minutes). Land of Sky's Legal Counsel, Susan Russo-Klein was present, too.

Call to Order –Chair Volk called the meeting to order at approximately 11:30 am.

Approval of Consent Agenda – The consent agenda composed of items A. January 22, Executive Committee Minutes; and B. Budget Amendment #5, was presented for approval with no modification requested.

Bob Tomasulo moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Patrick Fitzsimmons seconded, and the motion carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

New Business

Proposed One-Time Staff Bonus for Mountain Mobility Staff

Since Land of Sky has named Vicki Jennings as the Transformation Manager to lead the Healthy Opportunities Pilot, the Mountain Mobility team, and specifically Charlie Lee, has taken on many new roles and responsibilities to ensure Land of Sky continues to fulfill its obligations to Buncombe County under the contract to provide administrative support. Charlie's willingness to learn new tasks and to increase his responsibilities will provide valuable leadership to the restructured Mountain Mobility team. The funding for this bonus will come from the current Mountain Mobility budget. Today's request is to provide a one-time staff bonus to Charlie Lee in the amount of \$4,000.

Vicki Jennings shared that Charlie has been with Mountain Mobility almost five years and he is in the process of taking over some of the reporting responsibilities for the program, as well as other program work. She stated her support for the proposed one-time staff bonus.

Patrick Fitzsimmons moved to approve the one-time staff bonus in the amount of \$4,000 to Charlie Lee, as proposed. Bob Tomasulo seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote and without further discussion.

Healthy Opportunities Update

Land of Sky Regional Council has been named by Dogwood Health Trust to be the Transformation Lead for the Healthy Opportunities Medicaid pilot serving 18-counties in Western North Carolina. The pilot has four focus areas: Food Insecurity, Housing, Transportation and Toxic Stress. DHT has committed \$10 Million of their funding for this initiative and has provided the Council with a \$400,000 grant for office renovations as well as funding for operating costs. This pilot is one of three in North Carolina focused on the social determinants of health. Vicki Jennings shared that to date, the pilot has been provided funding for capital improvements to undertake renovations to develop a call center. The pilot is not slated to begin until July and the selection process is underway to staff the second position for this project. She noted also that DHT and Impact Health have had some staffing changes with Robyn Hamilton leaving Impact Health and Deon Greenlee-Jones named as the interim Executive Director. Everything is on track to move forward and the first determinant (Food) is expected to launch next month. Contact has been made with other transportation systems for best practices and the project is well under development for its July launch. Vicki Jennings noted that the Medicaid recipients that would be served under this initiative are those who have chronic health challenges, and who could benefit from having services to improve their social determinants of health. Medicaid funding might support Continuing Education classes for clients to improve their health outcomes, or to provide transportation to a farmer's market for better quality food, etc. The Healthy Opportunities team is working together to serve clients who could benefit from additional services.

No action requested. Information item.

Other Items

Executive Director Report

Nathan Ramsey shared that his current report is included in the agenda packet, and he encouraged Executive Committee members to reach out with any questions or comments regarding the report.

Nathan Ramsey highlighted that Covid cases are down throughout the region and at the organization. LOSRC is following Buncombe County guidance with regards to masks, etc. going forward, meetings would be offered in a hybrid format to allow for in-person attendance or through Zoom.

The DEQ held a work session this past Monday at the LOSRC office that had a large attendance. The goal of this work session was to provide ideas for how local governments can take advantage of the ARPA funding available.

DHT is planning to provide \$300,000 over the next three years to LOSRC's ECD for technical assistance to expand capacity and provide additional support to apply for grant opportunities.

The State is in the process of recommending local area workforce board consolidation through the NCWorks Commission. At this time, changes are not anticipated to the Workforce programs through LOSRC.

Nathan Ramsey noted that LOSRC has received over \$20 Million in grant funding over the past two years to support programs in the region.

Nathan Ramsey shared that the Department of Interior is the federal agency tasked with approving the indirect cost rate for LOSRC and currently, negotiations are underway on the rate for FY23. Once the negotiations are finalized, the organization will have a better idea of the level of compensation increases staff might look forward to in FY23. He noted that although some costs are rising (health plan, retirement, etc.), a lower indirect cost rate is a good time to provide an adequate salary increase for staff as that means less cost to the programs. He noted that currently, the Council is in a very good financial position.

Adjournment

Chair Volk adjourned the meeting, as there was no further business.

Respectfully submitted by Zia Rifkin



Office of the Mayor
City of Sky Regional Council



BUDGET AMENDMENT RESOLUTION #6

BE IT ORDAINED by the governing board of the Land of Sky Regional Council that the following amendment be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

SECTION I. To amend the appropriations as follows:

Area Agency on Aging	\$	6,624.00
Workforce Development		110,961.00
Economic & Community Development		10,000.00
General Operations		-
Total Appropriations	\$	<u>127,585.00</u>

SECTION II. It is estimated that the following revenues will be available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022.

Area Agency on Aging -Federal	\$	6,624.00
Area Agency on Aging- State		
Area Agency on Aging – Local		
Area Agency on Aging – Local Dues		
Area Agency on Aging – Private		-
Area Agency on Aging – In Kind		-

Area Agency On Aging – Fees	
Appropriated Fund Balance	-
Total Area Agency on Aging	\$ 6,624.00
Workforce Development - Federal	\$ -
Workforce Development - State	86,961.00
Workforce Development - Local	24,000.00
Workforce Development - Local Dues	
Workforce Development - Private	
Workforce Development - In Kind	-
Workforce Development - Fees	
Total Workforce Development	\$ 110,961.00
Economic & Community Development - Federal	
Economic & Community Development - State	-
Economic & Community Development - Local	10,000.00
Economic & Community Development - Local Dues	-
Economic & Community Development - Private	
Economic & Community Development - In Kind	-
Economic & Community Development - Fees	
Appropriated Fund Balance	
Total Economic & Community Development	\$ 10,000.00
General Operations -Local Dues	
General Operations - Appropriated Fund Balance	
General Operations - Fees	
General Operations - Other	
Total General Operations	-
Total General Operations	-
Total Estimated Revenues	\$ 127,585.00

SECTION III. The finance officer is authorized to allocate the amounts of projects, programs and functions to appropriate objects of expenditures in accordance with the requirements of the contract concerning each project, program or function. The Finance Officer is authorized to reallocate departmental appropriations among various line item objects of expenditures and revenues as necessary during the budget year. However, any changes to salary or compensation of any employee for any reason shall be approved by the Executive Director and the Executive Committee before such changes takes effect.

SECTION IV. The Chairman and/or appropriate officers are authorized to execute all contracts or grants necessary to implement this budget, including federal and state grants, contracts for assistance to local governments and agencies, and subcontracts to local entities necessary to implement Council programs and activities.

SECTION V. Copies of this resolution shall be furnished to the finance/budget officer as directions in carrying out her official duties.

Adopted this 23rd day of March, 2022.

Mayor Barbara Volk, Chair

Nathan Ramsey, Attest

Land of Sky Region Council
Revenue and Expenditures



Fiscal Year → **FY22**
Amendment → **Six**

Amendment Date → **3/23/22**

Revenue and Expenditures

Program Area	Proposed Budget as of Current Amendment -- 'Six'	Budget as of Previous Amendment -- 'Five'	Increase or (Decrease) between Current and Previous Amendment	Percent Change between Current and Previous Amendment	Percent Change between Current Amendment Proposed Budget and FY Begin
AAA - Area Agency on Aging	\$8,611,173	\$8,604,549	\$6,624	0.1%	0.1%
ECD - Economic and Community Development	\$7,711,025	\$7,701,025	\$10,000	0.1%	0.3%
MAWD - Workforce Development	\$4,602,830	\$4,491,869	\$110,961	2.5%	4.6%
MNG - General Operations	\$201,880	\$201,880	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Land of Sky Regional Council	\$21,126,908	\$20,999,323	\$127,585	0.6%	1.1%

Revenue by Source

Funding Source	Proposed Budget as of Current Amendment -- 'Six'	Budget as of Previous Amendment -- 'Five'	Increase or (Decrease) between Current and Previous Amendment	Percent Change between Current and Previous Amendment	Percent Change between Current Amendment Proposed Budget and FY Begin
Federal	\$12,867,676	\$12,861,052	\$6,624	0.1%	0.1%
State	\$2,230,709	\$2,143,748	\$86,961	4.1%	4.5%
Local	\$2,051,269	\$2,017,269	\$34,000	1.7%	2.0%
Dues	\$793,241	\$793,241	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Private	\$1,611,955	\$1,611,955	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Other	\$130,877	\$130,877	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
In-Kind	\$339,306	\$339,306	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Fees	\$837,182	\$837,182	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$264,693	\$264,693	\$0	0.0%	0.0%
Land of Sky Regional Council	\$21,126,908	\$20,999,323	\$127,585	0.6%	1.1%

Land of Sky Region Council
Revenue and Expenditures



FY22 Fiscal Year

Six Amendment Number
3/23/22 Amendment Date

FY22 Budget at Amendment Five; Total for AAA	Amendment Six; Total for AAA	FY22 Budget at Amendment Six; Total for AAA
--	------------------------------	---

AAA **Area Agency on Aging**

\$8,604,549	\$6,624	\$8,611,173
--------------------	----------------	--------------------

Unit	Grant Number	Grant Name	FY Begin	FY22 Budget at Amendment Five	Amendment Six	FY22 Budget at Amendment Six
AAA	595	Senior Companion	\$361,728	\$435,808	\$6,124	\$441,932
AAA	52V	Vaccine Outreach	\$0	\$99,500	\$500	\$100,000

**Land of Sky Region Council
Revenue and Expenditures**



FY22 Fiscal Year

Six Amendment Number
3/23/22 Amendment Date

FY22 Budget at Amendment Five; Total for ECD	Amendment Six; Total for ECD	FY22 Budget at Amendment Six; Total for ECD
\$7,701,025	\$10,000	\$7,711,025

ECD Economic and Community Development

Unit	Grant Number	Grant Name	FY Begin	FY22 Budget at Amendment Five	Amendment Six	FY22 Budget at Amendment Six
ECD	458	Madison Co. Housing Coalition	\$0	\$1,500	\$10,000	\$11,500

Land of Sky Region Council
Revenue and Expenditures



FY22 Fiscal Year

Six Amendment Number
3/23/22 Amendment Date

FY22 Budget at Amendment Five; Total for MAWD	Amendment Six; Total for MAWD	FY22 Budget at Amendment Six; Total for MAWD
\$4,491,869	\$110,961	\$4,602,830

MAWD Workforce Development

Unit	Grant Number	Grant Name	FY Begin	FY22 Budget at Amendment Five	Amendment Six	FY22 Budget at Amendment Six
MAWD	620	Inspire- ARC/DHT/MAHEC	\$325,086	\$325,086	\$110,961	\$436,047

Land of Sky Region Council
Revenue and Expenditures



FY22 Fiscal Year

Six Amendment Number
3/23/22 Amendment Date

FY22 Budget at Amendment Five; Total for MNG	Amendment Six; Total for MNG	FY22 Budget at Amendment Six; Total for MNG
--	------------------------------	---

MNG

General Operations

\$201,880	\$0	\$201,880
------------------	------------	------------------

Unit	Grant Number	Grant Name	FY Begin	FY22 Budget at Amendment Five	Amendment Six	FY22 Budget at Amendment Six
------	--------------	------------	----------	-------------------------------	---------------	------------------------------



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

- Item:** 3A – Waste Reduction Partners (WRP) Salary Adjustment
- Nature of Item:** Action
- Attachment(s):** Waste Reduction Partners (WRP) salary adjustment
- Background:** Waste Reduction Partners (WRP) is a statewide program operated by Land of Sky Regional Council in partnership with the NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). WRP Solid Waste Manager has been in the current position for twelve (12) years and serves in a ¾ position.
- WRP Solid Waste Manager has taken on additional responsibility and has increased their capability. Currently WRP Solid Waste Manager is earning an hourly rate of \$28.29 per hour. We request that this position hourly rate be increased to \$30.27 per hour. The WRP program has sufficient funding to pay for this increase in the hourly rate.
- Responsible Staff:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director, and Erica Anderson, Economic & Community Development Director
- Suggested Motion:** Motion to approve the salary adjustment for Planner III staff effective for the pay period beginning April 1, 2022.

339 New Leicester Hwy., Suite 140
Asheville, NC 28806
p: 828.251.6622 | 800.727.0557
f: 828.251.6353 | w: landofsky.org



March 11, 2022

To: Nathan Ramsey

CC: Danna Stansbury, Erica Anderson, Charlotte Sullivan

From: Terry Albrecht, WRP Director

Subject: Salary Adjustment Proposed for Jan Hardin, Solid Waste Manager, WRP

Jan Hardin has worked for the Council's Waste Reduction Partners program for almost 12 years with the last 5 years serving in a $\frac{3}{4}$ time position as the program's Solid Waste Manager. In this position, equivalent to a Planner II (Classification 26), Jan has managed grants, overseen technical assistance projects and provided technical supervision of the Waste Reduction Partner field assessors.

More recently, Jan Hardin has taken on additional grant writing and management roles with USDA and EPA programs, increased her supervisory responsibilities of the WRP statewide team members, demonstrated her technical expertise and outreach with state, regional and national professional organizations, and dedicated more partnership and liaison work with NC Department of Environmental Quality's environmental and recycling program staff.

Jan is currently earning an hourly rate of \$28.29 in a $\frac{3}{4}$ time position. Due to the above increasing level of expertise and program management responsibilities and in order to keep her salary competitive in a tightening employee market, I propose a salary adjustment increase to her pay rate by seven (7) percent to a new rate of \$30.27/hour. This proposed new rate would move Jan closer to the midpoint of the current play plan for a Planner II (26) position. I would propose to make this adjusted effective as soon as possible at a next complete pay period following approval. The WRP program has adequate funding to support this increase.

Let me know if this proposed salary adjustment for Jan Hardin is acceptable and any additional documentation needed to move forward with approvals. Thank you.



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

- Item:** 3B – Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Resolution
- Nature of Item:** Action
- Attachment(s):** TDM Resolution
- Background:** The Executive Committee is being requested to authorize LOSRC to submit and accept the annual TDM grant application to NCDOT for the FY2023 year.
- NCDOT has made \$53,507 available for State TDM funding for the FBRMPO region (Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties). The local match will be provided with STBG-DA funding from the FBRMPO at an equal amount, not to exceed \$55,000
- Responsible Staff:** Erica Anderson, Director, Economic & Community Development, Land of Sky Regional Council and Tristan Winkler, Director, French Broad Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO)
- Suggested Motion:** Motion to approve the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) resolution, submit the grant application for state funding, provide the required local match, make the necessary assurances and certifications and be empowered to enter into an agreement with the NCDOT to provide TDM management services and activities.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM RESOLUTION

FY 2022 RESOLUTION

Section 5311 (including ADTAP), 5310, 5339, 5307 and applicable State funding, or combination thereof.

Applicant seeking permission to apply for Public Transportation Program funding, enter into agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, provide the necessary assurances and the required local match.

A motion was made by *(Board Member's Name)* _____ and seconded by *(Board Member's Name or N/A, if not required)* _____ for the adoption of the following resolution, and upon being put to a vote was duly adopted.

WHEREAS, Article 2B of Chapter 136 of the North Carolina General Statutes and the Governor of North Carolina have designated the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) as the agency responsible for administering federal and state public transportation funds; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation will apply for a grant from the US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration and receives funds from the North Carolina General Assembly to provide assistance for rural public transportation projects; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of these transportation funds is to provide grant monies to local agencies for the provision of rural, small urban, and urban public transportation services consistent with the policy requirements of each funding source for planning, community and agency involvement, service design, service alternatives, training and conference participation, reporting and other requirements (drug and alcohol testing policy and program, disadvantaged business enterprise program, and fully allocated costs analysis); and

WHEREAS, the funds applied for may be Administrative, Operating, Planning, or Capital funds and will have different percentages of federal, state, and local funds.

WHEREAS, non-Community Transportation applicants may apply for funding for "purchase-of-service" projects under the Section 5310 program.

WHEREAS, Hannah Bagli at Land of Sky Regional Council hereby assures and certifies that it will provide the required local matching funds; that its staff has the technical capacity to implement and manage the project(s), prepare required reports, obtain required training, attend meetings and conferences; and agrees to comply with the federal and state statutes, regulations, executive orders, Section 5333 (b) Warranty, and all administrative requirements related to the applications made to and grants received from the Federal Transit Administration, as well as the provisions of Section 1001 of Title 18, U. S. C.

WHEREAS, the applicant has or will provide all annual certifications and assurances to the State of North Carolina required for the project;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Executive Director of Land of Sky Regional Council is hereby authorized to submit grant application (s) for federal and state funding in response to NCDOT's calls for projects, make the necessary

assurances and certifications and be empowered to enter into an agreement with the NCDOT to provide rural, small urban, and urban public transportation services.

I (Certifying Official's Name)* _____ (Certifying Official's Title) _____ do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of an excerpt from the minutes of a meeting of the (Name of Applicant's Governing Board) _____ duly held on the ____ day of _____, 2022.

Signature of Certifying Official

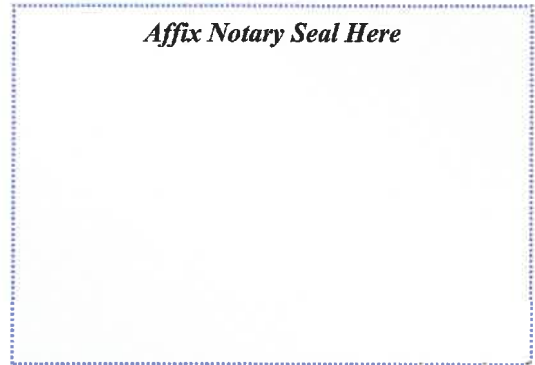
***Note that the authorized official, certifying official, and notary public should be three separate individuals.**

Seal Subscribed and sworn to me (date) _____

*Notary Public **

Printed Name and Address

My commission expires (date) _____





AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

- Item:** 3C - Economic & Community Development Staff Salary Adjustments
- Nature of Item:** Action
- Attachment(s):** Planner III salary adjustment
- Background:** The Economic & Community Development (ECD) Department is experiencing a tremendous increase in workload due to more demand in services from local governments and community partners.
- The most experienced planners on staff have expertise that is in short-supply and in high-demand from both the public and private sectors. The Planner III salary adjustment will provide compensation which is more competitive and reflective of the complexity of their work. Despite this pay adjustment, our salary schedule remains uncompetitive with the current labor market for this role. This salary adjustment is consistent with the Land of Sky Regional Council Pay and Classification Study.
- Responsible Staff:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director, and Erica Anderson, Economic & Community Development Director
- Suggested Motion:** Motion to approve the salary adjustment for Planner III staff effective for the pay period beginning April 1, 2022.



Land of Sky Regional Council Promotions

Name	Current Position	Pay Grade	Current Salary	Proposed Position	Proposed Pay Grade	Proposed	Salary Increase
Economic & Community Development Department							
Sara Nichols	Planner III	28	\$63,181	Planner III	28	\$73,181	\$10,000
Dr. Mary Roderick	Planner II	26	\$63,181	Planner III	28	\$73,181	\$10,000



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM

Item: 3D – Healthy Opportunities Update

Nature of Item: Information

Attachment(s): N/A

Background: Land of Sky Regional Council has been named by Dogwood Health Trust to be the Transformation Lead for the Healthy Opportunities Medicaid pilot serving 18-counties in Western North Carolina. The pilot has four focus areas: Food Insecurity, Housing, Transportation and Toxic Stress. DHT has provided the Council with a \$400,000 grant for office renovations as well as funding for operating costs. This pilot is one of three in North Carolina focused on the social determinants of health.

Responsible Staff: Vicki Jennings, Transformation Manager

Suggested Motion: N/A

1. Finance

- MIP (finance software) training will begin the first week in May.
- FY 22/23 budget work is underway.
- The auditors have started their on-site compliance work the week of March 14.
- We have not determined what the proposed staff COLA will be for the FY22-23 budget. The Council's indirect rate will decline for the upcoming program year which will allow for a staff salary increase without reducing program funds. Health Insurance and retirement rates will increase for FY22-23.

2. Economic & Community Development & Transportation Planning

a. Planning Services.

- We are excited to share that Sara Nichols, Regional Planner, presented at the Net Inclusion 2022 Conference on a panel about Coalitions and Digital Equity Planning. <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/net-inclusion-2022/>
- January 25 & 27 the Clean Cities team hosted a workshop series to educate local government and school personnel on how fleet and building decisions can improve air quality while strengthening public budgets. These sessions included AICP credits for sustainability and hosted over 50 people.
- We have released an RFP to seek a Creative Manufacturing Consultant. The RFP closed and candidates were interviewed by the selection committee. The project will be moving forward with a contract soon.
- The WNC Innovation Park was selected as a Duke Sanford School of Public Policy's Spring Consulting Project. We are working with staff and students as they begin their project. Staff continues to seek funding for a feasibility study/strategy to develop the WNC Innovation Park with the coalition of 5 COGS, Dogwood Health Trust, WCU, Montreat College, Community College System, and many other partners.
- We have kicked off a Regional Economic Collaboration and Analysis led by the Region's Chambers of Commerce and business sector. Ernst and Young was selected as the Consultant for this effort and is being funded by the EDA and Dogwood Health Trust.
- Staff continues working with several local governments and partners on applications for economic development, community development, transportation, and infrastructure implementation with BRIC/FEMA, EDA, and foundations. These projects will support transportation connections, resilience, job growth, industry expansion, and place-based development.
- Staff are working with several jurisdictions to support ARPA projects and administration. Please connect with Erica if you would like to learn more: erica@landofsky.org ARPA information can be found

here: <https://www.nc.gov/agencies/pandemic-recovery-office/american-rescue-plan-act-information-and-resources>

- The NCGS 160D requires all Comprehensive Plans be updated to meet the new guidelines by July 1, 2022. Please contact erica@landofsky.org if you have questions or would like assistance updating your plans.
- Staff is working with the EPA's Office of Research & Development to explore future growth scenarios for the region through 2045 based on land use, transportation, population and employment using UrbanSim. Contact Mary for more information: mary@landofsky.org
- LOS has been awarded a 205j grant to support continued development of the WNC Stormwater Program. LOSRC has launched the Regional Stormwater Services Program to support small MS4s and interested communities with stormwater management and MS4 stormwater compliance. Contact Mary for more information: mary@landofsky.org
- Staff is wrapping up stormwater system inventories and integrated MS4 reporting field app deployment with Fletcher and Woodfin.
- Staff has been working with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on a local GAC (Greening America's Communities) Project through a Pilot Program. The Project entails green infrastructure and stream restoration concept designs for A-B Tech's campus. Designs were completed and presented at 6 stakeholder and public meetings.
- Staff secured 319 funding for a new bioretention system for stormwater management in Black Mountain, part of the continued implementation of the Upper Swannanoa River Watershed Management Plan.
- Staff are wrapping up Student Connect- A partnership with NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and Southwest Commission to help reduce connectivity barriers for students across the state. This was a fast-moving effort with a tight timeframe to use CARES Act funds to distribute laptops, hotspots and materials throughout Regions A and B.
- Staff have contracted with the Department of IT to distribute and purchase service for 130+ hotspots for telehealth providers in the western region. The hotspots are being prepared to be distributed to the partner agencies.
- LOS partnered with NC DIT and the Division of Rural Health to distribute hotspots with 12 months service, for telehealth programs in WNC. To date 130 hotspots have been distributed to programs in three counties.
- LOS is partnering with the Institute of Emerging Issues and Dogwood Health Trust to assist develop and implement Digital Inclusion Plans in WNC.
- Clean Cities Program is assisting local governments prepare for VW Settlement projects. Please contact Sara Nichols with any questions or requests: sara@landofsky.org
- Staff are completing the survey, analysis and final products with Outdoor/Recreation Sector manufacturers to determine opportunities in supply chains, workforce and economic diversity in cooperation with High Country Council, Southwestern Commission and Riverbird Research. Final documents to be shared soon!

- Staff are working with several communities for planning and zoning assistance including Hot Springs, Mars Hill, Montreat, Woodfin, Flat Rock, Maggie Valley, Andrews. We are partnering with Region A staff to assist with communities in their region.
- We continue to partner with the Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Support Agencies, nonprofits, and economic developers to assist small businesses through COVID-19 impacts.
- Staff continues to serve as a Steering Committee member for the statewide RISE project for NC Department of Public Safety, NC Office of Recovery and Resilience.
- The TDM Coordinator is working with Workforce, Inspire, and employers to develop a vanpool for under-resourced individuals to access job sites.
- LOSRC's Waste Reduction Partners program is providing free water-use management assessments for large customers of the City of Asheville's Water Resources Department. These on-site assessments help identify utility costs savings for the City.
- LOS received CMAQ funding to continue support of air quality outreach initiatives in WNC.

b. Transportation Services

- MPO & RPO staff continue to work with local partners and NCDOT on project design and development.
- Staff is assisting in TAB, STIP and CTP development and Board meetings.
- RPO staff serving as NCARPO Association President, the NCARPO is the statewide organization representing Rural Transportation Planning Organizations in NC
- MPO and RPO staff are serving on the state's Prioritization Workgroup with other representatives from MPOs, RPOs, and NCDOT.
- The MPO is providing funding to several special studies in the region getting ready to being in FY 2022: Haywood County Greenway Master Plan, Reed Creek Greenway Extension Feasibility Study (City of Asheville), and the Buncombe County Multimodal Master Plan.
- The MPO has completed corridor studies on Hendersonville Road and Tunnel Road, in cooperation with the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and NCDOT. The Studies can be found here: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/local-plans/>
- The MPO recently accepted the Regional Transit Feasibility Study. More information is available here: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/regional-transit-feasibility-study/>
- The MPO-supported Richland Creek Greenway Study was recently completed by the Town of Waynesville.
- The MPO-supported studies for McDowell/Biltmore Avenue (City of Asheville), Close the GAP (City of Asheville), and Bike/Ped Counters (City of Asheville) are on-going.

3. Aging

Last fall AARP in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia collaborated to present the highly regarded Livable Appalachia Series. We invited experts and community leaders who shared resources, stories, and examples of communities meeting the needs of older citizens for housing,

transportation, high-speed internet and other essential services. Staff is working with AARP to prepare another round of programs to assist and encourage citizens, professionals and public officials to continue to make our Region livable for all. AND WE NEED YOU! Please complete the survey below before March 25 to help us design programs that meet your needs and guide us all to achieve our goal of a Livable Appalachia.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LivableAppalachia>

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

The Area Agency on Aging received feedback and suggested revisions from the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) about our ARPA plan that was submitted in December. We await further guidance from DAAS before we distribute funds to regional providers.

COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach

With the new hire of Jenna Sharrits to the team, she has focused on outreach to agencies already doing the work of getting information, resources, and vaccines out to the community. Some of those connections include Healthier Together, WNC Health Network, MAHEC, Public Health Departments, UNETE, Kepro, senior centers/ community centers, and food distribution organizations. Through those connections, she has been able to give out educational material such as bookmarks, over 1,000 placemats to food distribution sites, and flyers. As Jenna continues to learn about the position and the work already being done in the community, she hopes to grow the resources and information available to homebound older adults.

Family Caregiver Support Program

- Staff is facilitating the Caregiver Harnessing Tech to Connect Committee which presented a webinar on Advance Care Planning on March 8. Dr. Catherine Sevier, AARP State President, and Nansi Gregor-Holt, Geriatric NP, discussed how participants can complete advance care tools by using technological tools. They also discussed medical requirements for completing advance care plans and how to have discussions with family regarding these plans.
- Staff is working with providers to assist family caregivers of those who have been affected by the closing of the adult day care facility in Transylvania County.
- Staff is working with providers in the region on finding best ways to promote the use of the NC Caregiver Portal which offers training and information to help family and kinship caregivers.

Foster Grandparent Program

- Staff participated in the Junior League of Asheville Volunteer Expo at the Crown Plaza on March 12 to promote the volunteer opportunities in our Foster Grandparent Program and the Community Advisory Council. There was a great turnout and a lot of good interactions with people in attendance.
- Five Foster Grandparent volunteers participated in the Literacy Together tutoring training at the end of February. We are excited about this new opportunity to partner with Literacy Together.
- Staff continues to reengage volunteers and partnering schools. Sixteen Foster Grandparent Program volunteers have been able to return to in-person service.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

- Staff presented on Land of Sky Regional Council Area Agency on Aging at UNCA on March 17 and assisted with student-led focus groups in collaboration with former AAA Tai Chi participants to address workshop completion rates.
- Staff is working to bring an additional evidence-based health program to the region in the form of “Bingocize.”
- Staff is currently working with two Tai Chi instructors to bring a Tai Chi workshop to Buncombe County in the coming weeks.
- Staff is working with WNC Falls Prevention to seek ways to bring robust Falls Prevention educational opportunities and resources to the region.
- Staff and Asheville Terrace Community Health Workers continue to focus on the impact of social isolation and have added seven new residents to the “Neighbor Knock Program,” which provides daily check-in and reassurance visits.
- Staff and Asheville Terrace Community Health Workers continue to partner with MANNA and OLLI volunteers to bring nutrition to residents. In February, 102 bags of groceries were distributed to residents, and 222 “Neighbor Knock” visits were conducted.

Home and Community Care Block Grant

February 2022 Report of Services Provided:

- Adult Day Care/Health Days = 2,595
- Meals – delivered/congregate = 123,183
- In-home Aide hours =7,918
- Legal Services hours = 1,115
- Transportation trips =33,132
- Home Improvement Projects = 17
- Other: March 2022 is the 50th anniversary of the Senior Nutrition Program. Established in 1972, the Senior Nutrition Programs serve as hubs for older adults to access nutritious meals and other vital services that strengthen social connections and promote health and well-being. This year’s theme is “Celebrate, Innovate, and Educate.”

Money Follows the Person

Community Inclusion:

- Completion of new Community Inclusion Specialist training with start of community outreach activities.
- Outreach to 37 counties including 172 skilled nursing facilities to update database and provide education. 49 new social workers identified, and 12 facilities are without current social workers.
- Individual in-person and virtual training sessions held for six skilled nursing facilities in Anson, Buncombe, Henderson, and Macon Counties.

Transitions Coordinator:

Western counties being served: Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, Polk, Madison, McDowell, Rutherford, Mitchell, Madison. The current caseload for the Western counties is 12.

- Four are waiting on housing before they can transition.
- Three clients are scheduled to transition April 1, 2022.

- Three clients are scheduled to transition May 1, 2022.

Central counties being served: Forsyth, Davidson, Surry, Davie, Stokes, Yadkin. The current caseload for the Central counties is 11.

- Five clients cannot locate housing.
- Three clients are scheduled to transition April 1, 2022.
- Three clients are scheduled to transition May 1, 2022.

Ombudsman Program

- Ombudsman staff is working with other North Carolina Ombudsmen as well as the State Ombudsmen to create a Community Advisory Committee Re-entry Plan.
- Ombudsman staff is working with facilities to provide updated information regarding visitation/regulations.
- Ombudsman staff is working with the newest Ombudsman, Donna Case, to provide both educational and shadowing opportunities.

Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty)

Western counties being served: Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania

- Distributed all state respite funds to caregivers July – February; 83% of funds have been utilized by caregivers; remaining 17% to be utilized by June 15.
- Currently distributing \$11,000 in federal respite funds; half has been distributed; all federal respite funds to be utilized by August 15.
- Staff circulated information on Tropical Storm Fred Residential Recovery Program to Land of Sky staff and Project C.A.R.E. clients.
- Staff serves on AAA speakers/field trip committee. This month the speaker at AAA staff meeting was S. Vance Goodman, Benefits Enrollment Specialist, Council on Aging of Buncombe County. The Benefits Enrollment Center serves seniors and disabled persons living in Buncombe and surrounding counties.

Senior Companion Program

- Six volunteers retired in the last few months and two volunteers have been recruited with four additional volunteers in the coming weeks. Staff continues to reengage volunteers and agencies. The waitlist for older adults needing a Senior Companion Program volunteer is over 150. Staff will pause on adding more clients to the list until July and will be reassessed then. This will allow staff to review the list and determine how best to use available resources and volunteers.
- With a new ARPA grant, the program now has capacity for 72 volunteers. Currently, 60 volunteers are active and serving homebound older adults. Staff is actively recruiting volunteers the region targeting Madison and Transylvania Counties.
- Staff is looking for additional funding to support volunteer mileage reimbursement. Volunteers are reimbursed for their transportation of clients to the grocery and medical appointments. The program recently lost a large grant that supported mileage costs. As gas prices increase, it is important to secure new funding for this service.

4. Administration

- Buncombe County will begin the renovations of our office on Wednesday, March 23. The purpose of the renovations are to align our office space to support the Healthy Opportunities project. It has taken time for Buncombe County to secure the construction supplies and contractors for this project. The renovation is being funded by a \$400,000 grant from Dogwood Health Trust. The March Board of Delegates and Executive Committee meetings will be virtual since we anticipate the first few days of the construction process to be very loud from demolition activities.
- Attended the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) and Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) Policy Conference in Alexandria, Virginia. Erica Anderson, Economic & Community Development Director participated in a panel on “Strengthening Regions Through Equity and Economic Inclusion.”
- Nathan was reappointed as the North Carolina representative on the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) board.
- Nathan attended the Southeast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI) new directors training in Atlanta.
- Participated in the UNC School of Government/ncIMPACT forum held in Chapel Hill, NC as part of our region’s my Future NC postsecondary credential attainment project.
- Met with Congressman Madison Cawthorn regarding establishment of a FTZ in WNC and Congressman Cawthorn provided a letter of support. We have been meeting with members of Congress and NC’s US Senators about the FTZ.
- Participated in numerous Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) meetings and partner discussions.
- Hosted DEI committee meetings
- Arranged meeting LOS and Buckeye Hills Regional Council, OH
- Our contract with Craft HR Solutions will transition to an as needed basis on July 1 with at an agreed upon hourly rate.
- We are overseeing ARC INspire Recovery to Careers and ARC POWER Early Childhood Workforce projects which are each over \$1 million serving 11 counties in Western North Carolina.
- Funding from Dogwood Health Trust about increasing COG capacity in WNC is in process. Funding available would enable COGs to provide more support for local governments and communities.
- Land of Sky Regional Council is scheduled to receive almost \$1 million in state funds to support our Economic & Community Development team. These funds will help our team more effectively respond to the needs of our local governments.

5. Workforce

- Region's unemployment rate of 2.6% for December 2021 is the lowest in the region since September 1999 when it was 2.0%.
- NCWorks Commission will hold a special meeting on Wednesday, March 30 at 1:00 pm to discuss and vote on the draft Workforce Board System Alignment Memorandum which was approved by the Governance and System Alignment Committee on February 18. A link to the draft memorandum is following: [NC Commerce: NCWorks Commission Draft Memorandum on Workforce Development Board System Alignment Study](#)
- We received preliminary notice that our workforce funding for PY22-23 will be just over \$2 million. That is higher than we anticipated and we are working on several strategies to increase capacity.
- Board staff are focused on meeting the 20% work experience mandate for our NCWorks NextGen Youth programs.
- We are hosting a federal, state, and local government job fair on Wednesday, March 23 from 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm at the Virginia Boone Building, WNC Agricultural Center in Fletcher.
- WNC Career Expo is scheduled for Wednesday, March 30 from 11:00 am – 4:00 pm at Harrah's Cherokee Center.
- NC Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) announced a Reduction in Force for the DWS staff as a result of declining WIOA funding for North Carolina. There will be reductions in staff at DWS in Raleigh and the NCWorks Career Centers across the state. There were sufficient number of DWS employees to take early retirement so there will not be involuntary separations.
- We are participating as one of 15 statewide collaboratives by ncIMPACT/UNC School of Government and my Future NC as regional efforts focused on increasing postsecondary credential attainment.
- We are supporting the workers at Continental as they announced several years ago this facility was closing and final operations will end this year.
- Our Board staff are working closely with multiple partners, including but not limited to the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, NC Community College System and AB Tech, to support the Pratt & Whitney project. We have received approval from our financial monitor for these expenditures and hopefully we will have the funding to support this project. We are committing \$50,000 to support virtual pre-employment training.
- The board received a grant from Appalachian Regional Commission to expand the number of early childhood educators in our region. This grant application was an effort to continue the work we have done supported by NCWorks Local Innovation Grant with Buncombe Partnership for Children and the Child & Family Resource Center. We are partnering with the Southwestern Commission to expand the project to 11 counties and Dogwood Health Trust has graciously agreed to provide matching funds for this project.

- We are applied for the EDA Good Jobs Challenge in partnership with Dogwood Health Trust, AB Tech and Blue Ridge Community College. The focus will be on the advanced manufacturing and healthcare sectors, the request is for \$10 million.
- The board is supporting incumbent worker training (Business Accelerator Grants) with 12 (twelve) local employers.
- We are working with NC Department of Commerce to support incumbent worker training at Raybow PharmaScience in Transylvania County through the NC Job Ready grant.

6. Mountain Mobility

- Mountain Mobility saw steady trip numbers for February as compared to January. Inclement weather is still negatively affecting trip volume. We are hopeful that warmer weather will bring more consistent ridership in the next month.
- Also, our taxi voucher program - Ridership Independence for the Elderly and Disabled (RIDE) - has also declined as several of our organizational customers are losing clients due to the COVID pandemic and are being affected by the ongoing staffing crisis. Mountain Mobility is working to find new customers for the RIDE program as this provides a valuable service to our community.

7. NEMT

- We are submitting monthly reports to Buncombe County on the number of clients and caseload. It appears we did not lose as many Medicaid clients during the transition to managed care.
- Total trips scheduled and total trips taken have increased compared to one year ago but the total active cases have declined.

8. Healthy Opportunities

- The food domain launched earlier in March, and we are building capacity to launch transportation in May.
- We have hired Dalton Buckner from Hendersonville to serve as our Transportation Finance Specialist. Dalton starts work with us on March 28th and will be working to put transportation subcontracts in place as well as developing billing and reconciliation processes.
- We're excited to see the network start to come together to provide this needed service in Western North Carolina.