



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

**LAND<sub>of</sub>SKY**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

# LETTERS

## LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Land of Sky Regional Council Board of Delegates,  
Public Officials and Friends:

As Mayor of Weaverville and Chair of the Land of Sky Regional Council Board of Delegates, I'm blessed to serve the Town, the Council and our region. Many exciting things are happening in our region to help move us forward. It is inspiring to hear how our local governments are making life better for the people of Western North Carolina. We may have our differences, but we share so much more in common. In a world where there is more division than ever, the Council represents a place where we can come together, united for a common purpose to make this place we love better for future generations. We truly are neighbors helping neighbors, where federal, state and local partners join together with the private sector, nonprofits, philanthropy and others to tackle some of the most difficult challenges we face.

This past year has been a year of firsts for the Council. Our budget and staff numbers are at historic levels as we work to bring more resources to our region. We responded to the overwhelming concerns of our local governments and business community about the lack of affordable and workforce housing in the region by bringing a dedicated housing planner onto our team and initiating partnerships to expand housing options for our most vulnerable neighbors. We received one of the largest single grants in the Council's history and one of the first multistate partnerships with another local development district out of state; a \$3.99 million grant to support at risk youth in East Tennessee and the City of Asheville. We established the first Foreign Trade Zone in Western North Carolina to help local businesses remain competitive with their foreign competitors. We secured historic investments for infrastructure including transit, highways, water/sewer, and greenways. And we supported our region's economic developers to help bring more higher paying jobs here. The Council has helped our communities secure over \$75 million for much needed projects. And this list is just a few of the highlights of the past year.

The Council has done more but we have also kept our local government dues unchanged for 15 consecutive years. We have worked hard to be good stewards of the resources you have entrusted us with. While our financial position is stronger than ever, the most important asset we have is our role as a nonpartisan, fair, equitable and regional partner for our local governments. Our success is your success. We are grateful for the opportunity to live in this beautiful place, surrounded by some of the oldest mountains in the world, serving you and helping our neighbors have a better life.



Honorable Patrick Fitzsimmons  
Mayor, City of Weaverville  
Chair, Land of Sky Regional Council Board of Delegates



Local Government Leaders, Partners and Friends:

This past year presented us with several significant challenges, but our region has come together like never before to meet these challenges. You have demonstrated that we are truly in this together. Local governments have worked with federal and state partners, nonprofits, foundations, private sector and more to help make us stronger than ever before.

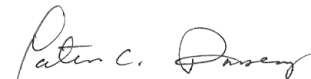


After the news broke that the Canton mill would be closing, we started working with our neighbors at the Southwestern Commission. US Department of Labor provided a \$6.5 million grant to support the workers. The State of North Carolina provided over \$50 million to support local governments, schools, and other needs. Dogwood Health Trust and other funders demonstrated how philanthropy can work seamlessly with the public sector to address the most significant challenges. This story isn't finished. There is still much work to do to help our region and the workers recover but we have made significant progress.

We have heard consistently from local governments and the private sector that housing is the greatest challenge for our region. The Council has moved quickly to increase our internal capacity to support affordable and workforce housing. We have added our first dedicated Housing Planner. We hosted our first Housing Summit. And we have leveraged additional housing resources to support older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Our region is experiencing transformational improvements to our region's infrastructure. Unprecedented resources targeted to broadband, transportation, water/sewer, greenways and more will benefit generations to come. Our region secured over \$45 million to support the Ecusta Trail. The I-26 corridor will continue to see massive investments in the billions of dollars as this interstate highway is expanded from Hendersonville to Weaverville. We also are competing for the expansion of passenger rail to Western North Carolina.

The 2023 Annual Report highlights programs that have positively impacted Western North Carolina. We offer this report to our community as an opportunity to review this year's accomplishments and celebrate our successes. We are accountable to you as we work to make the greatest impact to help our communities. For every dollar you invest in LOSRC, we have brought over \$45 to the region. Our future is bright for the wonderful Land of Sky because of the leadership and hard work of our local governments, Board of Delegates, elected officials, staff and partners. We can never say "thank you" enough.



Nathan Ramsey  
Executive Director, Land of Sky Regional Council

# BOARD

## LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Land of Sky Regional Council is governed by a board made up of local elected officials, economic development professionals, and key regional stakeholders. Each member government appoints two delegates – one primary delegate and one alternate delegate. Primary delegates are elected officials of the appointing member governments. Delegates serve at the pleasure of their appointing governing body.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD FY23



Chair  
Patrick Fitzsimmons, Mayor  
Town of Weaverville



Vice-Chair(Partial Year)  
Norris Gentry, Commissioner  
Madison County



Secretary  
Maureen Copelof, Mayor  
City of Brevard



Treasure  
Preston Blakely, Mayor  
Town of Fletcher



Past Chair  
Barbara Volk, Mayor  
City of Hendersonville



County Delegate  
Matt Wechtel, Chair  
Madison County



Municipal Delegate  
Sandra Kilgore, Vice Mayor  
City of Asheville



Minority Representative  
Jason Chappell, Chair  
Transylvania County



Aging Programs Delegate  
Bob Tomasulo  
Regional

## BUNCOMBE

Buncombe County - Terri Wells, Tim Love  
City of Asheville - Sandra Kilgore, Antanette Mosley  
Town of Biltmore Forest - George Goosmann III, Jonathan Kanipe  
Town of Black Mountain - Pam King, Archie Pertiller  
Town of Montreat - Mason Blake, Kitty Fouche  
Town of Weaverville - Patrick Fitzsimmons, Doug Jackson, Jeff McKenna  
Town of Woodfin - Elisabeth Ervin, Sheri Powers, Shannon Tuch

## HENDERSON

Henderson County - Rebecca McCall, John Mitchell, Christopher Todd  
Village of Flat Rock - Barbara Jeter, Pat Christie, David Dethero  
Town of Fletcher - Preston Blakely, Mark Biberdorf, Bob Davy  
City of Hendersonville - Barbara Volk, Lyndsey Simpson, John Connet  
Town of Laurel Park - Debra Hinson Bridges, Paul Hanson, Carey O'Cain  
Town of Mills River - Jeff Young, Daniel Cobb

## MADISON

Madison County - Matt Wechtel, Michael Garrison, Jeremy Hensley, Bill Briggs, Alan Wyatt  
Town of Hot Springs - Abigail Norton  
Town of Marshall - Nancy Allen, Aileen Payne, Billie Jean Haynie, Forrest Gilliam  
Town of Mars Hill - John Chandler, Nathan Bennett

## TRANSYLVANIA

Transylvania County - Jason Chappell, Larry Chapman  
City of Brevard - Maureen Copelof, Mac Morrow  
Town of Rosman - Brian Shelton, Missy Hendricks

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Buncombe - Justin Tyler  
Henderson - Brittany Brady  
Madison - Brad Guth  
Transylvania - Burton Hodges

## AT-LARGE MEMBERS

Buncombe - Vacant  
Henderson - John Mitchell  
Madison County - Terrance Dolan  
Transylvania County - Vacant

## AGING PROGRAMS DELEGATE

Bob Tomasulo, Regional Aging Advisory Council Chair

# MISSION

## LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Our mission is to provide creative regional solutions to relevant and emerging issues in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania counties while providing a standard of excellence in the delivery of federal, state, and regional services for our member communities.

# WHO WE ARE

## LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Land of Sky Regional Council is a multi-county, local government planning and development organization. We reach across county and municipal borders providing technical assistance to local governments and administer projects and programs which benefit our region's citizens.

**ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE:** This department is responsible for the overall administration and finances of Land of Sky Regional Council. This includes a growing, multi-million dollar budget, establishing and maintaining relationships with local, state and federal elected officials, departments and partners, human resources, marketing, public relations, as well as outreach and engagement, etc.

**ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Land of Sky is the local economic development district for our region, providing access to a wide variety of expertise, partnerships, and funding streams. Current efforts are focused on greater regional cooperation in the areas of job creation, job retention, quality of place, entrepreneurship, and economic competitiveness. Professionally trained and experienced staff diligently strives to improve economic, environmental, and social conditions in every program area and project.

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING:** French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – responsible for carrying out continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multi-modal transportation planning in the Asheville Urbanized Area which includes portions of Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and Madison counties. Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (RPO) is a voluntary organization of local governments working cooperatively with the NC Department of Transportation and local officials to enhance transportation planning opportunities for rural areas in Buncombe, Haywood, Madison, and Transylvania counties.

**AREA AGENCY ON AGING:** The AAA is a leader and catalyst in helping older adults in our four county region lead more independent, vibrant lives. Part of a national network of aging agencies established by the Older Americans Act, staff work to strengthen home and community care for older adults.

**TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE CENTER:** Land of Sky's Transportation Resource Center manages the administrative functions of Mountain Mobility and Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation, Buncombe County's community public transportation systems. Mountain Mobility provides transportation services to clients of human service agencies, local governments, and qualified citizens. NEMT provides transportation services for qualified Medicaid clients.

**MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** Land of Sky's Mountain Area Workforce Development (MAWD) designs and implements a strategic plan to meet the needs of the region's businesses for a skilled, reliable and proficient workforce; and meets the skill development and job acquisition needs of the region's jobseekers. MAWD is engaged in public/private partnerships that respond to emerging workforce issues and economic development opportunities.

**WORKFORCE:** The Land of Sky P20 Council fosters collaboration among employers, educators, and community members in the spirit of enduring economic prosperity, through the alignment of innovative cradle-to-career skills and resources that lead to life-sustaining job opportunities in our four-county region of western NC.

**CLIENT SERVICES:** Land of Sky has received funding to support several new initiatives to connect people to resources. **INspire Recovery to Career** is a partnership between Land of Sky and Southwestern Commission to provide community-based peer support services to people reentering the workforce after being discharged from treatment or released from prison. **Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program** provides NC Medicaid Managed Care clients with eligible services in the areas of transportation and housing. This program covers the 18 most western counties in North Carolina. **GO PLACES** introduces and prepares youth and young adults ages 18-24 for the world of work through placement into paid work experiences and on a path to more equitable career opportunities with their peers. **Transitions to Community Living (TCL)** connects people to mental and physical healthcare services and supports that help them maintain a home in their own name, instead of living in a facility.

# FUNDING SOURCES

## LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

### FEDERAL

US Department of Agriculture  
 US Department of Commerce  
 US Department of Energy  
 US Department of Health & Human Services  
 US Department of Labor  
 Environmental Protection Agency  
 Corporation for National & Community Service  
 US Department of Transportation- Federal Highway Administration  
 Appalachian Regional Commission  
 US Department of the Treasury

### STATE

NC Department of Environmental Quality  
 NC Department of Health & Human Services  
 NC Department of Commerce  
 NC Department of Transportation  
 NC Institute for Emerging Issues  
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
 Vaya Health

### PRIVATE

Pisgah Health Foundation  
 WNC Bridge Foundation  
 Z Smith Reynolds  
 John M Belk Endowment  
 Dogwood Health Trust  
 NC State University Institute for Emerging Issues

### OTHER

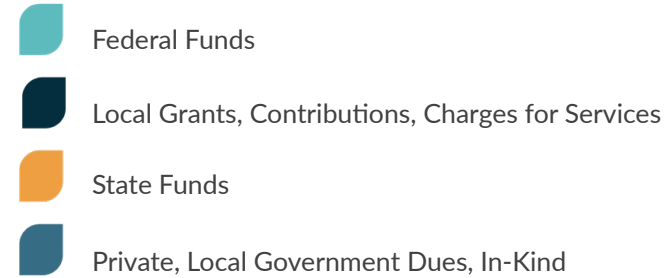
Local Grants and Contributions  
 Local Charges for Services  
 Rents  
 Usage Allowance

### LOCAL DUES & IN-KIND

# BUDGET

## LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

A balanced budget is adopted each year, as required by state law. The budget is amended several times during the fiscal year, as many federal grants have different fiscal cycles.



### FY 2023 REVENUES

**\$14,483,923**

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Federal   | \$9,552,735 |
| State   | \$1,832,713 |
| Local Grants, Contributions, Charges for Services | \$1,893,827 |
| Private   | \$771,204   |
| Local Government Dues                             | \$320,668   |
| In-Kind   | \$112,776   |

### FY 2023 EXPENDITURES

**\$14,075,123**

|                                  |             |       |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| Area Agency on Aging             | \$6,298,510 | (44%) |
| Workforce Development            | \$2,429,558 | (17%) |
| Economic & Community Development | \$3,278,372 | (23%) |
| Buncombe County Transportation   | \$1,964,474 | (13%) |
| General Fund                     | \$104,209   | (.5%) |

*FOR EVERY DOLLAR OF LOCAL DUES, WE  
 LEVERAGED **\$45.17** IN RETURN INVESTMENT.*

# P-20 COUNCIL

## WORKFORCE

Thanks to the generosity of the John M Belk Endowment, the Land of Sky P20 Council launched an opportunity for community partners, schools, and others to demonstrate how they could use a small amount of funding through the P20 Council's grant award for community engagement to address the region's educational attainment needs. Because reaching our strategic goals in early education, K12 success, postsecondary completion, employer credential alignment requires planting seeds across the communities of western NC. The following grantees were awarded **\$12,500** for specific ideas addressing the P20 goals:

- Smart Start: Allowed the parents of 20 children to look for employment with children enrolled in licensed facilities.
- Literacy Together: 75 students in the two after-school programs. 12 young adults of color trained as tutor interns.
- Muddy Sneakers: 258 Students & 12 Teachers in Transylvania and Madison Counties benefited from instructional support in science education.
- Buncombe Early College: 300 students and 3-5 industry partners impacted by new branding that demographically matches the enrollment percentages of the subgroups found within the opportunity gap of the community

The P20 Council received **\$1,441,125 Million** from the U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities through "Project Collaborate: Addressing the Workforce Gap through Inclusive Training Opportunities". This three-year project will enable the Land of Sky P20 Council to partner with two community colleges, A-B Tech and Blue Ridge, to provide work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities to historically marginalized individuals and communities. A-B Tech will offer electrical, solar, and manufacturing training programs to new entrants to the workforce, dislocated workers, and incumbent workers. Individuals will be served annually through a mix of embedded industry certifications, single semester short-term training curriculum certificate programs, as well as traditional certificate, diploma, and degree programs through the program. Blue Ridge seeks to enroll students into one of several skilled trades pathways offered through Continuing Education. Pathways include, but are not limited to, General Construction, Electrical, HVAC, Masonry, Plumbing, and Tool and Die.

The Council has five action teams and the blocks to the right are some deliverables from those teams.

## PATHWAYS TO ENROLLMENT THROUGH FAFSA ACTION TEAM

- Conducted a needs assessment with secondary and postsecondary counselors, career coaches, etc. to determine the barriers for FAFSA completion.
- Assembled a FAFSA P.A.C.K. - Promotions for the Awareness and Completion Kit for partners to use for events involving students and families to increase exposure to FAFSA and address common misconceptions. This kit has visited every county in the Land of Sky region through counselors' offices, partner events and in one-on-one settings. It features cornhole boards, a spinning wheel with common FAFSA questions and answers, selfie frame and prizes featuring logos from the P20 Council's colleges and universities in the region.
- Formed a partnership with Western regional representative for the College Foundation of NC for joint collaboration on county and region-specific initiatives, such as FAFSA completion sweepstakes in April 2023 for four area high schools.

## CREDENTIALS OF VALUE ACTION TEAM

- Became involved as the only local collaborative in the planning process for the state's new short term credential focus ("NCWorkforce Credentials").
- After release of the state's general list of credentials, determined which NCWorkforce Credentials were being offered by our regional training providers and posted on website for easy navigation from general public: [losp20.org](https://losp20.org).
- Published this list on our website so that individuals had a format in which they can easily explore locations of training, length of trainings, format of trainings and the occupational growth prospects connected to trainings.

## COMMUNICATIONS & CONNECTIONS ACTION TEAM

- Identified a manufacturing and healthcare employer to feature #worklocal employees in for the purpose of exposing students to occupations using real examples of successful careers being experienced by near-peer local high school graduates now employed at these employer sites.

### Let's add some fun to the F.A.F.S.A. process!



Get on the list to loan out our FREE P20 kit to expose more of our students to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Send a FB message to P20 today to learn more!

## POLICIES & REGULATIONS ACTION TEAM

- Determined a comprehensive process that would be inclusive of regional stakeholders to map the planning process for selecting policy priorities.
- Incorporated local organizational input in the planning process.
- Produced the first regional set of priorities for the legislature deliberated, vetted and ultimately signed by P20 Council members (along with an advocacy toolkit to determine next steps).

# ACCELERATE BUNCOMBE

## CLIENT SERVICES

In FY23, Land of Sky partnered with the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce to participate in Accelerate Buncombe – an initiative to assist those with significant barriers to gain training and employment in an in-demand career. Many participants are justice involved and need additional support to be successful. During the program, Land of Sky has placed 15 participants in training for a qualifying credential. One of those participants – Kelby – worked with Certified Peer Support Specialist and LOS staff member Halston Fisher to meet his goals.



“Kelby and I met a few months ago shortly after his release from federal prison, and we immediately connected. His desire to learn how the world with new technology has been moving since his incarceration seems to have been a driving factor in all of his accomplishments. Kelby’s curiosity and willingness to allow me to help navigate his desires led us to talking about the Accelerate Buncombe program. Since he was new to the field of manufacturing, we figured that the Certified Productions Technician Training would help better his understanding of the trade. Kelby then decided to add CPT to his plate of goals to strive for and to challenge his mind. Kelby has let me know that committing to AB has served to develop other life skills like discipline, time management, prioritizing life routines, and other activities. Today, Kelby has obtained his drivers license and has his own vehicle, is active in his recovery, an outstanding member of his halfway house, and over halfway done with his CPT training. We stay engaged on a regular basis.” - Halston Fisher, CPSS

BUNCOMBE

# INSPIRE PROGRAM

## CLIENT SERVICES

WNC Recovery to Career serves the needs of individuals who are leaving treatment centers and ready for career/life skills. The program also focuses on employment readiness and education attainment. The INspire Program has completed two years of service to the recovery community by offering peer support to individuals who have completed treatment and need assistance with employment, education, housing, transportation and other social supports. Utilizing Certified Peer Support Specialists, all of whom have lived experience, INspire served 290 clients in FY23 with the following:

- 100% of participants received assistance for vital appointments such as interviews, career centers, court, aftercare, probation/parole, and recovery meetings.
- Of the 290 referrals, 263 were placed in employment, while 10 entered a short-term training program to obtain new skills for future employment.
- Provided 110 participants with work boots/shoes and uniforms to reenter the workforce for a total of **\$10,229**.
- 91 people were provided rental assistance with sober living rent and entry fees for a total of **\$55,095**.
- **\$674** was spent on participants to obtain vital records such as driver license, birth certificates, transcripts and other vital documents.
- 100 clients were provided with cell phones with 90-day service plans, totaling **\$12,700**, so they could stay connected to their network of recovery and receive calls and emails from employers.
- **\$2650** was spent on Uber\Lyft to provide clients with transportation when a Certified Peer Support Specialist was unavailable.

#’s

Many people transition to the Asheville area for the vast recovery community and resources. INspire has served people from the counties to the right in and outside of the Land of Sky region.

BC  
89

HC  
7

MC  
2

TC  
5

OTHER  
104



Certified Peer Support Specialists (L-R) Dillon Moss and Rick Montgomery, with Peer Support Services Director Brandon Manson accepting the Oxford House “Community Partner of the Year” award in Raleigh in April 2023.

# GO PLACES

## CLIENT SERVICES

In February 2023, Land of Sky was awarded **\$3.99 Million** from the U.S. Department of Labor to implement GO PLACES – Growth Opportunities: Peer Leaders Activating the Community for Employment Success. The program is designed to assist 18 to 24 year olds who are justice involved/justice adjacent and have a history of generational poverty to embrace non-violent solutions and strategies to break the cycle of poverty and justice intervention. Through this program, participants will receive education and training, along with leadership training and other supports to ensure employment/life success. GO PLACES, a two-state partnership with the East Tennessee Development District, will serve 350 young adults over a three-year period.

BUNCOMBE

### GO PLACES ACTIVATING SUCCESS

The overall purpose of the GO Places Project is to introduce and prepare youth and young adults ages 18-24 for the world of work through placement into paid work experiences and on a path to more equitable career opportunities with their peers here in Asheville, North Carolina.

- Decrease recidivism rates within specific census tracts within Buncombe County
- Decrease violent crimes within specific areas through paid educational training, mentorship, workplace employment, and 12-month mentorship involvement and projects. With partnerships with MY DADDY TAUGHT ME THAT, YWCA, SPARC FOUNDATION
- Increase labor and education participation rates within specific populations and communities.



Contact:  
Erika Bowman at  
828.470.0879 or  
Erika@landofsky.org



# HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES PILOT PROGRAM

## CLIENT SERVICES

The Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program is for Managed Care Medicaid members who need assistance with the social determinants of health – food, transportation, housing and toxic stress/personal violence. The goal is to “move the needle” on the overall health of our communities by focusing on a person’s other physical needs. A pilot program of the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Opportunities is sponsored locally by Impact Health, a sister organization of Dogwood Health Trust. Land of Sky has been contracted to coordinate transportation – including necessary car repairs – to the far western 18 counties.

### HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES BY THE #S:



Car repairs and the number of members served

Trips



Transportation mileage reimbursement

# RECOVERY HOUSING PROGRAM

## CLIENT SERVICES, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Land of Sky received a grant from Dogwood Health Trust in June 2023 to begin analysis of the region’s recovery housing landscape. This effort will map recovery housing providers, research best practices and then implement strategies to add recovery housing beds in WNC.

This focus on recovery housing brings together Land of Sky’s Client Services, Workforce Development, and Economic and Community Development departments. Supporting the recovery community is central to Land of Sky’s INspire program and this work helps ensure employers across the region can meet their workforce needs.



# REGIONAL PROJECTS

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION & APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION** – As the region’s Economic Development District, we provide technical assistance for our communities. This includes project development, grant writing and assistance with state and federal programs and compliance. Staff works with local governments and the EDA and ARC representatives for NC to raise awareness of programs and opportunities at the federal and state levels. LOS staff work on specific project development and management with local government staff and partners in many ways, most notably in Broadband, Economic and Workforce Development, Health and Human Services, Planning, Transportation, Infrastructure, Greenways, Stormwater, and Housing Services. Working closely as an extension of local government staff is critical to advance regional priorities and initiatives.
- **COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)** - The 2022 CEDS was updated and adopted by the Land of Sky Regional Council Board in December 2022. Highlights of the 2023 updates:
  - County profile datasheets updated with decennial Census data, current workforce data, and state demographics.
  - Project specific storymaps included in the CEDS Implementation section.
  - [New Open Data Portal](#) linked to the CEDS. New Regional projects [storymap](#) linked in the CEDS.

The [2022 CEDS](#) has been submitted to EDA and is a ‘living’ document on the ArcGIS Online web platform.

- **REGIONAL COLLABORATION ANALYSIS.** – Future workforce analysis, including automation; and Strategic Priorities was paired with a Regional Economic Collaboration and Analysis led by the Region’s Chambers of Commerce and business sector. This project recommends regional-scale, public-private partnerships to address critical needs. This project initiative was funded by the EDA and Dogwood Health Trust and has led to these studies:
  - [Regional Resiliency and Strategic Plan Alignment Report](#)
  - [Labor Shed and Target Industry Analysis](#)
- **WNC INNOVATION PARK** - Promote economic and workforce opportunities within the region by developing a collaborative approach to research and development in the western region. This is focused on current and emerging technical sectors such as biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, IT, and climate data with many stakeholders.
- **WNC FOREST BIOMASS INITIATIVE** - The Southern Appalachian Forest sector has suffered a number of setbacks due to the recent paper mill closures across the region. The June 2023 closure of the 120-year-old Pactiv/Evergreen mill in Canton, NC left an enormous gap in the community and entire regional forest sector. The mill itself employed 1,200 people, with an additional 700 working in the forest industry sector. The Pactiv/Evergreen mill supported 75% of the region’s pulp products industry which has been devastated by the closure. Southwestern Commission and Land of Sky Regional Council have partnered with many entities to support the forest sector as it pivots to new markets.
- **SCALING CREATIVE MANUFACTURING IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA** - LOSRC and regional partners completed the [WNC Creative Manufacturing Sector Development Plan](#). This plan provides a framework to support, connect, and develop new opportunities to market products within the creative manufacturing sector. The projects identified in this plan will assist businesses to scale and become more sustainable. Implementation of the plan is scheduled for 2023/2024 as we delve deeper into the creative manufacturing ecosystem to close the gaps addressed in the plan and diversify our region’s strong creative culture.
- **LOS RACIAL DISPARITY REPORT** – The region’s [racial disparity report](#) has been updated using 2022 Census data. This report is a summary of some common demographic and socio-economic data, classified by race and ethnicity, to help provide statistical data to discussions of racial disparities that exist within the Land of Sky region, across North Carolina, and around the United States.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

REGIONAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY  
**\$11,509,284**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES  
**\$582,546**

BROADBAND  
**\$18,310,394**

RESILIENCE & ENVIRONMENTAL  
**\$2,792,369**

INFRASTRUCTURE  
**\$4,955,332**

TRANSPORTATION  
**\$38,388,982**

TOTAL  
**\$76,475,907**

# STORMWATER

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### TRANSYLVANIA

**BREVARD TIMES ARCADE ALLEY  
STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS -  
\$250,000 GOLDEN LEAF AWARD  
(APPLIED FY23, AWARDED FY24)**

The project will construct new publicly owned stormwater infrastructure in the Times Arcade Alley, which is located in the heart of Brevard's downtown business district. The alley does not have any drainage infrastructure so frequently floods under any amount of sustained rainfall due to rooftop and surface runoff. Brevard receives 67 inches of rainfall annually, 4-6 inches monthly, and thunderstorms occur about 45 days each year. The new infrastructure is designed to handle the 25-year storm (7.69"/24 hours), which will significantly mitigate flooding in the alley and in two perpendicular streets that receive the alley's runoff.



### BUNCOMBE

**WEAVERVILLE STORMWATER  
SYSTEM INVENTORY AND GREEN  
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
\$53,695.15 205(J) GRANT**

To continue to modernize and optimize stormwater management in our region and the French Broad River Basin, we created an online, interactive, stormwater system inventory for the Town of Weaverville. The stormwater inventory and map are a continuation of previously 205(j)-funded work to map all of the systems in the region. We will also integrate the mobile FieldMap app for inspections and IDDE developed with 2020 205(j) funding.

The inventory was also used in conjunction with a watershed assessment to develop a concept plan for improving the hydrology and ecology of riparian areas and two stormwater retention basins in the town's Main Street Nature Park located behind Town Hall. The concept plan also includes nature play, new access points and accessibility measures.



**STORMWATER WETLANDS**

WEAVERVILLE NATURE PARK :: PRELIMINARY VISIONING :: JUNE 01, 2023



# REGIONAL STORMWATER SERVICES PROGRAM

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This regional program assists communities meet their MS4 permit compliance requirements while reducing costs for each jurisdiction. Staff assisted with four stormwater management plans to implement the six minimum control measures required by their MS4 permits. Participating jurisdictions: Fletcher, Weaverville, Montreat, Laurel Park.

Two Good Housekeeping/Pollution Prevention workshops were held for municipal staff in Fletcher and Weaverville, and also attended by staff from Laurel Park, Hendersonville, and Woodfin.

With support from the NC DEQ 205(j) grant program, a new regional stormwater brochure and info magnet have been developed and distributed to communities with MS4 permits throughout the region. Two community-based social marketing (CBSM) campaigns were also developed: one focused on residential stormwater runoff control in collaboration with RiverLink and Lenoir Rhyne University, and one focused on municipal riparian area management in collaboration with the City of Hendersonville.

Four rain barrel workshops were held in Fletcher, Weaverville, Woodfin, and Asheville with more than 50 residents learning about stormwater management and taking home 60 rain barrels. One rain garden workshop was also held in Black Mountain at Lake Tomahawk Park.



## NO MOW ZONE



No Mow sign for priority restoration areas in Hendersonville.

*RiverLink staff distributing plants for volunteers at the newly constructed bioretention cell in Lake Tomahawk Park (205(j) funding covered plantings and staff time to organize the workshop).*



# RESILIENCE AND HAZARD MITIGATION

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### COG DISASTER RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE (\$325,000)

The COG Disaster Recovery and Resilience (DRR) funds have supported a variety of resilience building and hazard mitigation assistance and helped bring an additional \$3.7M in funding to the region for flood mitigation and stormwater projects. It has also continued to support the Land of Sky Regional Resilience Assessment (LOSRRRA) along with new features in AccelAdapt - the interactive, on-line decision-making platform for exploring vulnerability and risk to flooding, landslide and wildfire at the parcel and census tract scales.

The funds have also supported the development of the Domestic Preparedness Region (DPR) 9 THIRA/SPR (Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment/Stakeholder Preparedness Review). The DPR 9 THIRA/SPR is a FEMA-directed assessment for 12 counties. This work is still in progress and will be completed in 2024.

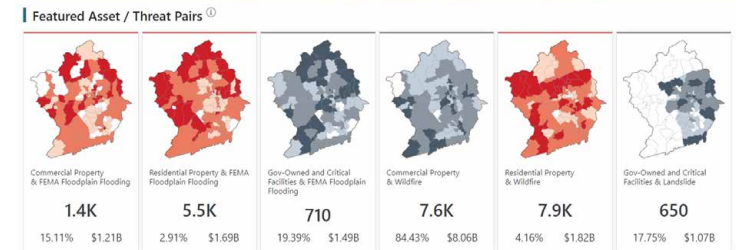
### FEMA BUILDING RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES (BRIC) CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY (\$202,800)

These funds will also support the continued development of the LOSRRRA, and integration of the analysis into local comprehensive, hazard mitigation, transportation, stormwater and other plans, as well as building codes, steep-slope, erosion/sediment control, tree, and landscaping regulations and ordinances, to align regionally and to identify mitigation and adaptation strategies to implement. It will also focus on identifying and prioritizing mitigation projects that will have the greatest impact in increasing community resilience within the context of each watershed, and completing a Benefit-Cost Analysis for up to three of these.

### CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE LOWER MUD CREEK FLOOD MITIGATION - DEQ LOCAL ASSISTANCE FOR STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS PROGRAM (LASII) \$1,897,236.00, NORTH CAROLINA LAND AND WATER FUND (NCLWF) \$1,120,929, GOLDENLEAF \$250,000

The project addresses flooding in the Upper Mud Creek sub-watershed. Mud Creek flows north around downtown Hendersonville on its way to the French Broad River. There are 75 commercial properties (\$48,643,000 total assessed value) and 18 residential properties (\$13,258,000 total assessed value) with medium to high combined vulnerability and risk for flooding in the project's immediate area of influence. As of 2018, there were 13 repetitive flood loss properties with 61 claims totaling \$1,183,716.

The project proposes acquisition and optimization of flood routing of tributary and mainstem flows to take advantage of available storage at multiple flood stages, but particularly for high frequency flood events on Mud Creek and tributary flooding on UT1 & 2, where flows are currently confined to channel reaches by berms. The removal or partial removal of berms on City-owned Wilson and Brevard Church sites and also on the proposed South Grove acquisition parcels will connect flows to flood storage at a lower stage allowing for flood reduction benefit during more frequent flood events.



## WNC RESILIENCE SYMPOSIUM

Staff helped organize the WNC Resilience Symposium on April 11-12 together with Pew Charitable Trust and partners with nearly 100 participants who learned about climate change, flood hazards and risk, and available programs, partners and resources to build adaptive capacity and resilience.



## STATEWIDE RESILIENCE INITIATIVES

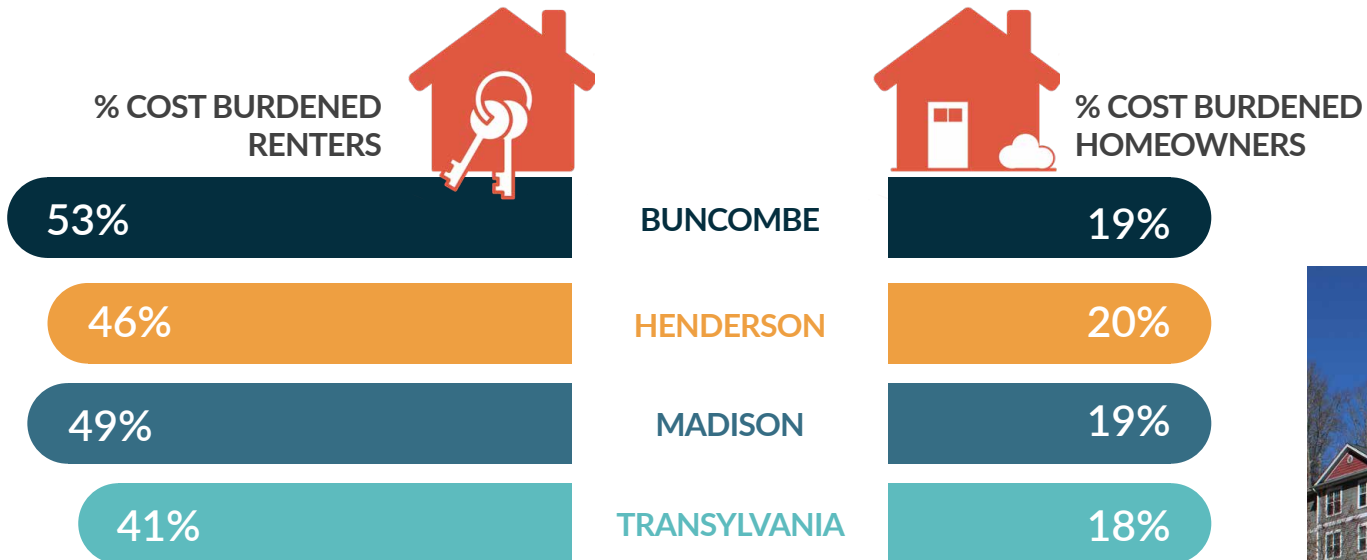
Staff are serving on a NC Flood Resiliency Blueprint Vulnerability and Risk Technical Advisory Group, on the NC Resilience Exchange Steering Committee, and on the RISE Steering Committee.

# HOUSING

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Land of Sky received an ARC READY grant (\$100,000) to support our region's workforce. The private sector, as well as the public sector, have all identified housing (and childcare) as the top priorities and fundamental infrastructure lacking in our region to support a strong workforce. As we build our region's economic resilience, this gap in support and infrastructure has become acute as housing availability has reached a crisis point. This award is facilitating the development of our Regional Housing Program, which includes formation of a Regional Housing Alliance, Regional Housing Trust Fund, and Recovery Housing Program, currently in the early days of formation, to address the workforce and affordable housing crisis in our region. Staff are providing services to our local governments to seek ARPA, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), HUD, and other federal funding to expand housing resources for the region's workforce.

LOSRC has adopted a comprehensive approach, utilizing diverse data sources and collaborative efforts to enhance housing strategies. The staff's synthesis includes insights from the 2021 Bowen WNC Housing Needs Assessment, the current ARHC Baker-Tilly Study, and perspectives from the NC Leadership Forum. LOSRC staff is facilitating a 15 county Workforce and Affordable Housing Asset Inventory project, to support ongoing efforts to address the challenges posed by the housing crisis in the region.



### HOUSING NEEDS

Housing stands as a critical issue in our region, with a significant number of households facing cost burdens. When households allocate more than 30% of their income towards rent, mortgage, and other necessities, they are considered cost-burdened. The latest American Community Survey presents a clear picture of the share of renters and homeowners grappling with this cost burden in our community.



# BROADBAND

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

WestNGN has been working with communities to grow broadband infrastructure and digital inclusion access across WNC. Land of Sky partnered with the Institute for Emerging Issues BAND NC leading to all counties in WNC having a digital inclusion plan. Staff supported 22 GREAT grant applications that led to \$17,800,000 in projects that will provide service for nearly 5,000 LOS residents.

LOS was also the recipient of an ARPA award from Buncombe County to provide Wi-Fi to 700 units at HACA properties. This program had an ACP outreach component that assisted over 100 people for the program.

# SOLID WASTE MANAGERS

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Land of Sky Regional Council hosts a consortium of Solid Waste Managers in the region. The group meets quarterly to discuss best practices related to landfill management and recycling activities.

# GRANT ADMINISTRATION & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

Village of Flat Rock

### HOUSING

City of Hendersonville 7th Ave Revitalization - 4 home rehab and new sidewalks

### WATER & SEWER

Mars Hill - Woodhaven Pump Station replacement

Black Mountain - US-70 new waterline

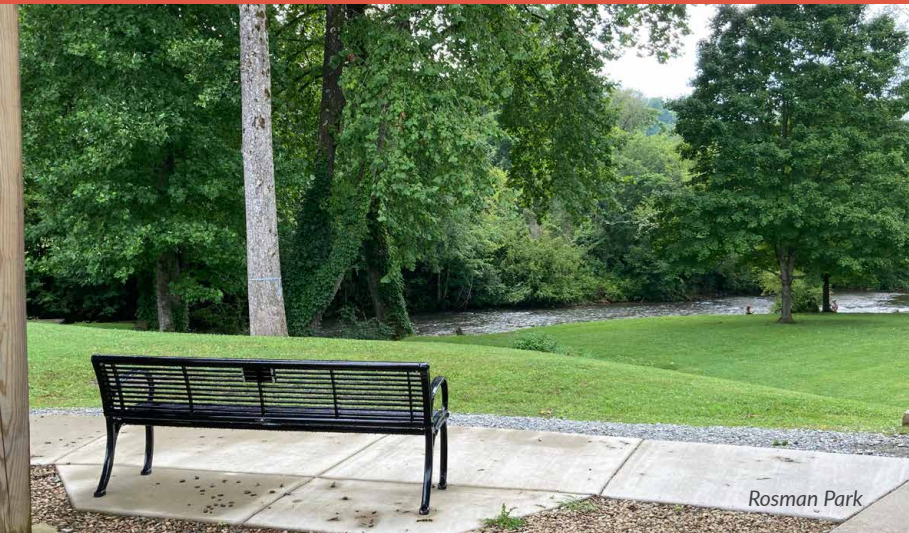
Mars Hill Water & Sewer extension on Calvin Edny Road

### RURAL TRANSFORMATION GRANTS

Rosman Parks and Recreation Plan

Rosman Pedestrian Bridge

Mars Hill Downtown Small Area Plan



# ZONING – LAND USE

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Staff provide planning and zoning technical assistance to several jurisdictions in the region including serving as the Zoning Administrator for Montreat and Marshall. Services include support for local land use boards, site plan review, and code enforcement.

# GIS

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Land of Sky Regional Council supports local governments with GIS technical assistance. This assistance includes zoning updates, web mapping services, data creation and special studies. LOSRC currently contracts with the Town of Black Mountain, Town of Fletcher, and Town of Woodfin with on-call GIS technical service..

# COGWORKS

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COGWorks is an educational initiative within Economic and Community Development. This program provides monthly learning, training, and networking opportunities around emerging issues for the region's planning community. Opportunities within this initiative take the form of free or low-cost virtual and in-person educational sessions with choice speakers covering a variety of topics. COGWorks sessions also provide Certification Maintenance (CM) credits, which are required for members of the American Planning Association's American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). All sessions are sponsored by NC-APA.

This year, COGWorks hosted seven free sessions providing 6.0 CM credits, 1.0 CM credit towards ethics educational requirements, and 1.5 CM credits towards sustainability and resiliency educational requirements to our planners. Sessions hosted between twenty and eighty participants made up of municipal planners, local government officials, and private sector practitioners. All but one session was held virtually making this program affordable and accessible to our region. AICP attendees of these sessions satisfied their biennial ethics and sustainability and resilience CM credit requirements and obtained a quarter of their overall biennial required CM credits for no cost.

This year's sessions covered:

- Broadband and digital inclusion
- Barriers and best practices to incorporating Accessory Dwelling Uses into zoning ordinances
- Housing affordability financing tools and policies
- Conservation-oriented land use and transportation planning
- Equitable and harmonious housing development and growth
- Ethics in planning
- Rural roadway safety trends and initiatives

# FOREIGN TRADE ZONE

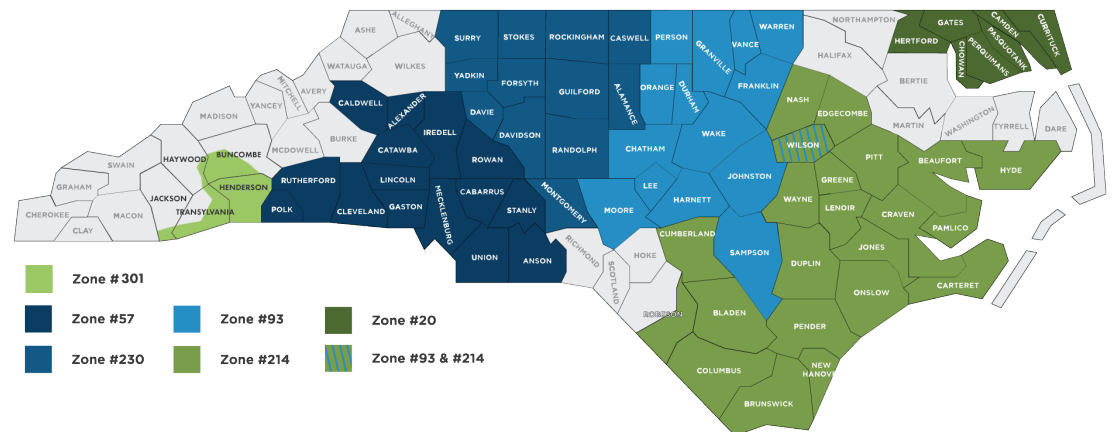
## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Land of Sky Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ #301) was approved by US Department of Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo on June 12, 2023 under Board Order #2144. FTZ #301 will initially serve Henderson County and parts of Buncombe County, Haywood County, Jackson County, and Transylvania County with oversight from US Customs and Border Protection officers from the Port of Greenville-Spartanburg (South Carolina).

Businesses approved for FTZ status can use special Customs procedures to help save on duties, taxes, and fees on imported merchandise, along with other benefits. The FTZ program aims to promote U.S. competitiveness and activity by removing some of the disadvantages of manufacturing in the U.S. The Land of Sky Foreign-Trade Zone will aid businesses in this region become more globally competitive and will help place them on a level playing field with their foreign competitors. The Economic Development Partnership of NC projected a Foreign-Trade Zone serving just Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties would add at least 300 jobs and a minimum of \$100 million investment.

Even with the addition of FTZ#301, there is a gap in serving all WNC counties. Land of Sky Regional Council is working in partnership with the Asheville Regional Airport (AVL) to establish a US Customs Port of Entry at AVL. Establishing this Port of Entry will allow FTZ #301 to expand its service area to include all unserved counties in Western North Carolina as well as allow AVL to clear flights originating in a foreign nation.

Foreign-Trade Zones are an integral part of North Carolina's economy. More than 10,000 North Carolina jobs are supported by current FTZ users with exports of over \$75 million. Western North Carolina is home to over 1,000 manufacturing firms representing around 40,000 jobs. Foreign-Trade Zone #301 will provide WNC companies another opportunity to expand their business while giving our economic developers another tool to help existing firms expand and new businesses locate in the region.



# CLEAN VEHICLES COALITION

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Staff worked to develop a creative Charging and Fueling Infrastructure grant to close charging gaps throughout WNC. This program helped reduce 5,568 tons of Greenhouse Gas's and 818,557 gallons Greenhouse Gas Emissions. New charging projects and vehicle purchases from various funding sources such as Volkswagen Settlement Funds, have leveraged over **\$12,000,000** in funding to Western North Carolina.

Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition (LOSCVC) was accepted into the Department of Energy Clean Cities Energy and Environmental Justice Initiative (CCEEJI) program and are working with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (ECBI) to help develop a Clean Transportation Action Plan (CTAP) and ensure application of the Justice 40 initiative. This program will hire a Community Engagement Liaison to help facilitate CTAP planning with ECBI.

LOSCVC was awarded two national awards from the Department of Energy, one for having the third highest community engagement numbers in the country and another for Innovative Outreach for the Electric School Bus Drag Race.



CHEROKEE

### ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS DRAG RACE

On September 8, 2022 Land of Sky CVC partnered with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to host an electric school bus drag race. Chief Sneed came out to drive the electric bus, which ended up being a narrow win for speed against the diesel counterpart. Other issues discussed at this event included challenges for electric charging infrastructure, battery sustainability, bus logistics, funding opportunities, V2G technology, and power of partnerships. This program highlighted the Cherokee tribe's commitment to being forward-thinking in air quality for their children and mountain natural resources. Speakers included representatives from Duke Energy, Proterra, Thomas Built Bus, Southwest Commission, North Carolina Department of Education, Environmental Protection Agency, Cherokee Boys Club, and Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition.



BUNCOMBE



HENDERSON



# WISH COLLABORATIVE

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
AREA AGENCY ON AGING & CLIENT SERVICES

In July 2022, Land of Sky launched the WNC Initiative for Supportive Housing, or WISH Collaborative, to build the community's capacity for accessible living for and with people with high support needs. Funded by a multi-year grant with federal dollars from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, The WISH Collaborative is one of four pilot projects in NC focused on ensuring older adults, adults experiencing intellectual, developmental, and/or physical disability, and adults with traumatic brain injury can live with independence in the community. The effort helps ensure individuals can stay in their homes and age in place rather than live in a costly full-time skilled nursing facility.

The WISH Collaborative works to build the community's capacity for safe, accessible, affordable housing and transportation by bringing individuals with lived experience together with healthcare providers, affordable housing organizations, transportation planners, community health workers, and more. In its first year, the WISH Collaborative launched solutions groups to improve coordination among the region's home repair and modification organizations and train community health workers to support the housing and transportation needs of their clients. In addition, the WISH Collaborative pursued federal and private grant dollars to cover costs for home modifications and repairs that will help keep vulnerable residents in their homes.

The big-picture work of the WISH Collaborative aims to bring systems change to better address a complex problem: the housing and transportation needs of adults with high needs. While this effort demands a focus outside the walls of Land of Sky Regional Council, it also requires a look at our own policies. Here, WISH joined with other Land of Sky programs including INspire, to advocate for change to internal policies that prevented Land of Sky staff from transporting clients and partners. While it may seem simple, this small policy revision has already helped one individual capable of living with independence move out of a nursing home. Because Land of Sky staff can now drive clients, a person enrolled in the Money Follows the Person program could make the required in-person appointment to rent a new home at an affordable housing complex.

## OUR WORK



Expand housing and transportation options so individuals with high support needs can live with independence.



Ensure individuals with high support needs have access to community.

# WATERSHED PLANNING

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

## FRENCH BROAD RIVER PARTNERSHIP (FBRP)

Mission: To maintain and improve stream health within the French Broad River Watershed for environmental and economic benefits.

Vision: That broad-based interests work collaboratively to ensure the French Broad River Watershed serves as a source of drinking water and recreation while supporting biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, forestry, and economic growth.

Staff continue to support the FBRP, which has 122 member organizations from local, state and federal government, businesses, consulting businesses, academia, and non-profits along with individual supporters, and serve as the Vice Chair and Communications Chair of the Steering Committee as well as on the Water Quality Work Group.

The FBRP launched the Love Your Watershed campaign this year, an education and stewardship initiative, which is being implemented at 9 sites throughout the basin - six on the French Broad River or nearby tributaries, two in the Pigeon River subwatershed, and one in the Nolichucky River subwatershed.

The Partnership also worked on further developing watershed action plans for the Cane Creek in Buncombe and Henderson Counties, Richland Creek in Haywood County, and the Upper Swannanoa River in Buncombe County together with Black Mountain and Montreat.



## WICKED WEED BREWING: SUSTAINABILITY ASSISTANCE

Wicked Weed Brewing is continually seeking to enhance its strong environmental and sustainability programs. Last year Wicked Weed requested technical assistance from Waste Reduction Partners for its production facility in Candler and Brew Pub in Asheville. In October 2022, WRP's Terry Albrecht, Greg Goodman and Jan Hardin helped with a waste sort to help optimize waste reduction practices. The project team analyzed the garbage stream to measure the amount of recyclables and compostables that slipped in, and the team also analyzed recycling stream to determine the percentage of contamination. Solutions were explored. Then in March 2023, WRP's Marshall Goers and Marc Rudow conducted a greening assessment for Wicked Weed's Brew Pub. This effort included a review of energy efficiency measures, water conservation strategies, recycling practices and food waste reduction efforts. Wicked Weed was recently recognized in the states NC GreenTravel program.



Waste Reduction Partners staff assists Wicked Weed Brewing's Green Team to conduct a waste sort and optimize waste management practices at Wicked Weed's production facility in Candler.

BUNCOMBE

# WASTE REDUCTION PARTNERS

## ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In FY2023, Waste Reduction Partners (WRP) engineers assisted 26 manufacturers and institutions across the Land of Sky region with utility cost-saving and environmental sustainability assessments. These manufacturers, local governments, schools and churches are projected to save more than **\$62,000** annually from energy efficiency, water conservation and waste reduction assistance efforts.

Statewide, the Waste Reduction Partners program delivered on-site technical services to 136 business and institutions across 46 counties, with more than **\$5.8 million** in projected annual operational cost savings. The WRP program estimates past 5-year client savings of **\$29 million**, through the technical assistance provided to help clients improve their environmental performance, reduce carbon footprints, and cut wastes.

County Assistance Breakout - Number for Clients Assisted



## AMERICAN RED CROSS ASSISTANCE

In 2022 the American Red Cross engaged Waste Reduction Partners' on-site consultative services to identify environmental and energy management improvements for four pilot operation centers across North Carolina. The work focused on energy management, solid waste reduction, recycling, water efficiency practices and is being utilized to craft a national program to reduce the Red Cross's environmental and carbon footprints. As part of these pilot assessment WRP engineers conducted a comprehensive "greening assessment" for the Western North Carolina Chapter of the American Red Cross in Asheville. The WRP team provided over a dozen of operational improvement recommendations to save more than **\$3,500** annually while reducing environmental impacts.



BUNCOMBE

# LAND OF SKY RPO

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (LOS RPO) is a voluntary organization of local governments working cooperatively with the NCDOT and local officials to enhance transportation planning opportunities for rural areas in Buncombe, Haywood, Madison, and Transylvania counties.

### REGIONAL

- Participated in SPOT Workgroup - a statewide workgroup that helps make technical funding decisions to the Board of Transportation
- Serving as statewide NCARPO ex Officio, NCARPO Transit Liaison, and various other statewide committees.
- Continued coordination with local partners on changes to the TIP/STIP due to cost increases and provided updates on USDOT grant opportunities
- Worked w/ MPO on the development of the FBRMPO LOSRPO Wildlife Crossing Plan

### BUNCOMBE

- Worked w/ MPO staff and Buncombe County and NCDOT Division 13 to identify highway and pedestrian Projects for submittal to NCDOT Prioritization process P7.0.

### MADISON

- Participated in Community Transportation Advisory Board meetings and provided transit planning support as needed.
- Working w/ NCDOT and Madison County staff identified and submitted Rural Carbon Reduction Plan eligible projects in the county.
- Working w/ MPO staff and Madison County and NCDOT Division 13 to identify highway Projects for submittal to NCDOT Prioritization process P7.0.

### TRANSYLVANIA

- Working with Transylvania County staff, county Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and NCDOT Division 14 to identify highway Projects for submittal to NCDOT Prioritization process P7.0.
- Working with NCDOT, Transylvania County and City of Brevard staff identified and submitted Rural Carbon Reduction Plan eligible projects in the county.
- Continued to support City of Brevard in Ecusta Trail planning. Design and funding efforts.
- Providing transit grant administration to the county.
- Facilitated an additional **\$800K** in Federal Highways Municipal Bridge Program Funding for the construction of Kings Creek Bridge on Railroad Avenue.
- Staff, with input from Conserving Carolina, drafted the Federal Lands Access Program Project Application on behalf of the City of Brevard, for Design and Preliminary Engineering Funds for the Transylvania County portion of the Ecusta Rail Trail. Total amount of awarded **\$1M**.
- Worked with NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division (IMD), City of Brevard, Henderson County, FBRMPO, and Pisgah National Forest (PNF), served as the Grant application Core Working Group. NCDOT IMD was the applicant for NSFLTP, they hired Alta Planning to draft the grant application. The total award was **\$21,400,000**.
- Worked with NCDOT IMD, City of Brevard, Henderson County, and FBRMPO on the core working group for the RAISE grant application. The City of Brevard was the applicant, NCDOT IMD contracted with Alta Planning to develop the application. The total award was **\$24,559,469**.
- Assisted the City of Brevard develop a project to construct a pedestrian bridge across the Davidson River to connect Brevard's Estate Trail to a destination near the Pisgah National Forest (PNF) gateway. The bridge will be ADA compliant and connect to the existing Estate trail on the south side of Davidson River and by a combination of raised deck and pathway it will connect to R-5799, Pisgah Forest Intersection improvement project.
- LOSRPO on behalf of Transylvania County and the City of Brevard, submitted an intersection improvement project to be constructed at the intersection of US 64/US 276/NC 280 near the entrance of the PNF. The project was selected for funding.
- LOSRPO staff on behalf of the City of Brevard developed an application for Carbon Reduction Funds (CRF) to NCDOT Transportation Planning Division (TPD) for the construction of a section of the Estate Trail. This section of the Estate Trail will connect neighborhoods around the Mary C. Jenkins Community & Cultural Center to the community gardens on Silversteen Drive. At Silversteen the trail connects to an existing section of the Estate Trail running from Silversteen Drive to US 64 Rosman Hwy.

### HAYWOOD

- Working w/ MPO staff and Haywood County and NCDOT Division 14 to identify highway Projects for submittal to NCDOT Prioritization process P7.0
- Working w/ MPO staff assisted Haywood County staff navigating new Urban/Rural Boundary discussions and subsequent impacts to Public Transit funding
- Participated in Transportation Advisory Board meetings and provided transit planning support as needed.

# FRENCH BROAD RIVER MPO

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) spent 2023 programming federal funds to transportation projects, working with local government partners to prioritize projects and planned investments in the region's transportation network, and working through a number of structural changes required every 10 years as part of the census. The work that the MPO, its Board, and staff completed in 2023 includes:

- Programmed **\$511K** in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 for public transportation projects aimed to assist seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- Programmed **\$408K** in FTA JARC (Job Access Reverse Commute) funds to assist our public transportation providers with routes and programs that enable inner-city workers to access work in more rural and suburban areas.
- Assisted local governments with Two Successful Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) Feasibility Study Applications (Swannanoa Greenway & Above the Mud.) Staff provided assistance to other applications, including Woodfin, Mars Hill, and Canton, but were not successful.
- Managed the Haywood County Greenway Master Plan after awarding funds to Haywood County for the work. The plan was adopted by commissioners in the Summer of 2023.
- Worked through Project Swaps with member governments as part of the development of the 2024-2033 TIP/STIP. This work included looking at what projects would be cut without action and what actions were possible to keep priority projects moving forward.
- Adopted the 2024-2033 TIP/STIP, which includes more than **\$2B** in planned transportation investments for the MPO Planning Area.
- Adopted a New MPO Planning Area based on the updated Asheville Urban Area.
- Awarded a Safe Streets for All Regional Planning Grant to develop a Safe Streets Action Plan for the region which will enable local government partners to pursue Safe Streets money through USDOT for implementation.
- Awarded and Hired a Regional Safe Routes to School Coordinator to begin activities throughout the region to make our schools and school-age children safer.
- Submitted Projects for P7.0 to consider projects for future investments.
- Programmed **\$1.9M** in Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRSSAA) funds towards regionwide planning studies.
- Programmed Surface Transportation Block Grant Direct Allotment (STBGDA) funds through FY 2028, which includes funding for the Ecusta Trail, sidewalks on Riceville Road, and additional funds towards existing projects such as the Woodfin Greenways and others.
- Developed the Biennial Congestion Report.
- Adopted Identified Needs for Wildlife Crossings & Park and Rides.
- Educational Events on Prioritization, Rural Road Safety, Hellbender Trail, MPO Orientation.
- Adopted a New 5307 Suballocation Formula that determines how regional transit funds are distributed throughout the region.

*Pictured Right: The French Broad River West Greenway ribbon cutting took place on September 15, 2022. The new section of roughly 1.1 miles of greenway in Asheville provides a connection from New Belgium Brewing to Carrier Park, and make the French Broad River/French Broad River West Greenway the longest continuous greenway in the region at nearly four miles. The project was engineered and constructed with 80% of the funding provided through the French Broad River MPO.*



# NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAID TRANSPORTATION

## TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE CENTER

Land of Sky provides Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation (NEMT) services for Buncombe County residents with Medicaid. Transportation to and from providers is a critical component for Medicaid beneficiaries to obtain necessary health care. NEMT services consist of arranging and/or paying for transportation. When the beneficiary has access to a suitable mode of transportation, but lacks the means to use it, the county must assist with the means through gas vouchers, mileage reimbursement, etc. When the beneficiary lacks both means and mode, the county is responsible for arranging transportation at a cost within allowable Medicaid regulations. However, the obligation to provide transportation is not without qualifications.

**94,624**

Number of trips scheduled by the call center

**58,879**

Number of trips provided by vendors in

**12,145**

Number of private vehicle trips reimbursed

**292**

Number of new assessments completed

**11,332**

Number of information and referral calls received

**1,289**

Average number of active cases monthly



## MOUNTAIN MOBILITY

### TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE CENTER

Mountain Mobility, Buncombe County's Community Transportation System, was established in 1989 to increase the level of transportation services available to Buncombe County residents. Land of Sky is the administrator of Mountain Mobility through a contract with the county.

Mountain Mobility provided **113,856** trips, with **993,215** service miles traveled throughout Buncombe County.

#### TRAILBLAZER SERVICES

This service connects passengers in the outer parts of Buncombe County to ART (Asheville Rides Transit) bus service provided by the City of Asheville.

Black Mountain – **8,710** passengers served  
Enka-Candler – **15,006** passengers served  
North Buncombe – **3,445** passengers served

#### RIDE (RIDERSHIP INDEPENDENCE FOR THE DISABLED AND ELDERLY)

RIDE is our taxi voucher program that allows Buncombe County residents who are either aged 60+ and/or disabled to purchase discounted vouchers that can be used to access locations within Buncombe County. This service is effective for same-day trips or for those whose condition/disability make riding public transit a hardship. This program had **64** active participants in FY23.

**7,360** vouchers were sold. The value of each voucher is **\$10.00 = \$73,600** in cab fare purchased.

#### THE SENIOR BUS PASS PROGRAM

This program provided a monthly bus pass to **123** seniors in the city of Asheville. At a cost of **\$10** per pass, Mountain Mobility provided more than **\$8,500** in bus passes in FY23.



**YOUR ORGANIZATION'S  
SUCCESS DEPENDS  
ON A STRONG  
WORKFORCE.**

**BUSINESS SERVICES**



Recruit



Retain



Train



Transition

Buncombe County - (828) 251-6200

Henderson County - (828) 694-1755

Madison County - (828) 782-2632

Transylvania County - (828) 883-2550

# IN THE NUMBERS

MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE

**\$666,171**

## ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER (ADW) BUDGET

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| \$97,281  | Adult Training Funds  |
| \$9,298   | Dislocated Workers Training Funds   |
| \$31,238  | National Dislocated Workers Grant Training Funds                              |
| \$296,206 | Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (serving Buncombe and Madison) |
| \$232,148 | Blue Ridge Community College (serving Henderson and Transylvania)             |

**\$440,367**

## YOUTH BUDGET

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| \$27,144  | In-School Youth Participant Support          |
| \$84,096  | Out-of-School Youth Participant Support      |
| \$13,617  | Out-of-School Youth Participant Training     |
| \$45,795  | Madison County Schools                       |
| \$137,671 | Henderson County Schools                     |
| \$132,044 | Goodwill (serving Buncombe and Transylvania) |

**15,239**

## Job Seekers Served

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Buncombe     | 7,969 |
| Henderson    | 2,547 |
| Madison      | 3,981 |
| Transylvania | 742   |

**61**

## Youth Individuals Served

|              |    |
|--------------|----|
| Buncombe     | 19 |
| Henderson    | 34 |
| Madison      | 7  |
| Transylvania | 1  |

**122**

## ADW & Youth enrolled in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) training services

|              |    |
|--------------|----|
| Buncombe     | 81 |
| Henderson    | 24 |
| Madison      | 10 |
| Transylvania | 7  |

**17,375**

## Business Services provided to employers

|              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| Buncombe     | 11,503 |
| Henderson    | 2,280  |
| Madison      | 2,774  |
| Transylvania | 278    |

**FOR EVERY \$1 INVESTED IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN OUR REGION  
OVER \$34 IN WAGES WERE EARNED BY WORKERS SERVED BY MOUNTAIN  
AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD.**

# SUCCESS STORIES

## MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Abigail had been out of school for almost three years and wanted the opportunity to finish her high school credits and earn a diploma. After spending nearly a year in a public school, Abigail decided she needed an alternative path to reach her goal of graduating.

Abigail and her mom scheduled a meeting with the Graduation Coach at The Career Academy; she was almost 18 years old with very few credits toward graduation. It was apparent that she needed a lot of classes in a very short time to graduate in June of 2023. Abigail was introduced to the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act program and assigned a Career coach. The Career Coach worked to enroll her in the WIOA program and get her enrolled in The Career Academy.

Abigail began taking classes, she needed to take online classes as well as in person classes through Henderson County Schools. During the months of August 2022 through January of 2023 Abigail completed a total of sixteen classes. She finished all these classes during the first semester and got a B average or better in over half of them.

As well as taking all these classes Abigail was enrolled in our paid work experience program. She started working before school in August and worked until January 2023. She was coming in at 7:30am and working as a custodial assistant. She was a very good worker, she communicated when she would not be able to work and worked a two week notice before deciding to focus on her classes second semester. Abigail gained confidence in herself and valuable work experience responsibility for her future employers.

After graduation, Abigail will begin an apprenticeship with WNC Source Children's Services Department working in the daycare and working toward her Child Development Associate Credential. Abigail's past has not been easy, and she knows the future will not be easy either. However, during her time at the Career Academy, her teachers and support staff have helped her realize her potential and what she can accomplish by giving her best. Abigail spoke of her time at The Career Academy, "I believe everyone has potential and can learn from mistakes and improve them. For me this school has done everything they could possibly do for me to be able to graduate. I've learned that if you put your mind to something you can accomplish anything."



"In my future I want to go to school for Early Childhood Development and I want to create my own daycare to run. I have always loved helping and taking care of little kids, like my sisters' kids and other kids I know," said Abigail.

HENDERSON

## BUNCOMBE

Sarah started with the NextGen program in October of this year. Soon after, they completed their GED and were eager to begin work experience! Sarah and I spoke numerous times about different internship options, and they told me that they have always been a crafty person and had made jewelry and worked in different art forms in the past and had worked on a farm when they were younger. We explored a few different options but when I heard that Fifth Season Gardening was hiring, I immediately thought of Sarah and knew that they would be a perfect fit. Fifth Season is a plant store, but also so much more. They have all of the plant and gardening things that you can imagine but also host classes, serve coffee, and work hard to educate the public on all things planting and growing. It's the kind of place that you always come out of having learned something new!



When I explained our internship program to Fifth Season, they were really excited about it and eager to have Sarah come in and interview. The interview went really well, and Sarah started the following week. Sarah was definitely nervous to start, as they expressed to me, but did not let that stop them from showing up and excelling from the beginning. The first time I visited Sarah, they were in the back outdoor area repotting strawberries with the biggest smile on their face. Sarah showed me around outside and told me about all of the different plants that they had just gotten in.

Fast forward a couple of months, Sarah has also mastered working the register and answering customer questions and has even begun writing up customer manuals for all of the different soil that they carry as well as for growing all different types of vegetables and plants! It has been really inspiring to see Sarah work hard and become more confident. I have spoken with Sarah's supervisor and coworkers, and they cannot say enough good things about them!! They actually told me that they only wish they had more Sarahs!

# BUSINESS ACCELERATOR GRANTS

MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board provides funding for businesses to train their incumbent workers. This program is a cost reimbursement program. In Program Year 22, July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023, the workforce board provided **\$31,045** to five companies for upskilling their workers. The companies receiving grants included Appalachian Restoration and Cleaning, Craft HR Solutions, Friday Services, Sew Co, and Survival Innovations. A total of 22 incumbent workers were trained. Many workers received nationally recognized credentials that resulted in added responsibilities and a wage increase. The training also increased the stability and competitiveness of the employers.



*Sew Co - Business Accelerator Grant Recipient*



# ARPA WORK-BASED LEARNING GRANT

MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board received a grant of **\$704,000** from the American Recovery Act to upgrade the skills of incumbent workers in small businesses impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Businesses must have 3-25 employees and be located in Madison, Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania County to qualify for a grant up to **\$25,000**. This is a cost reimbursement grant. Devil's Foot Beverage received a grant of **\$17,800** in April 2023.

*Pictured Left: Ben Colvin, President Devil's Foot Beverage, and Barbara Darby, Assistant Workforce Director / Regional Business Services Leader, LOSRC*





Survival Innovations - Business Accelerator Grant Recipient

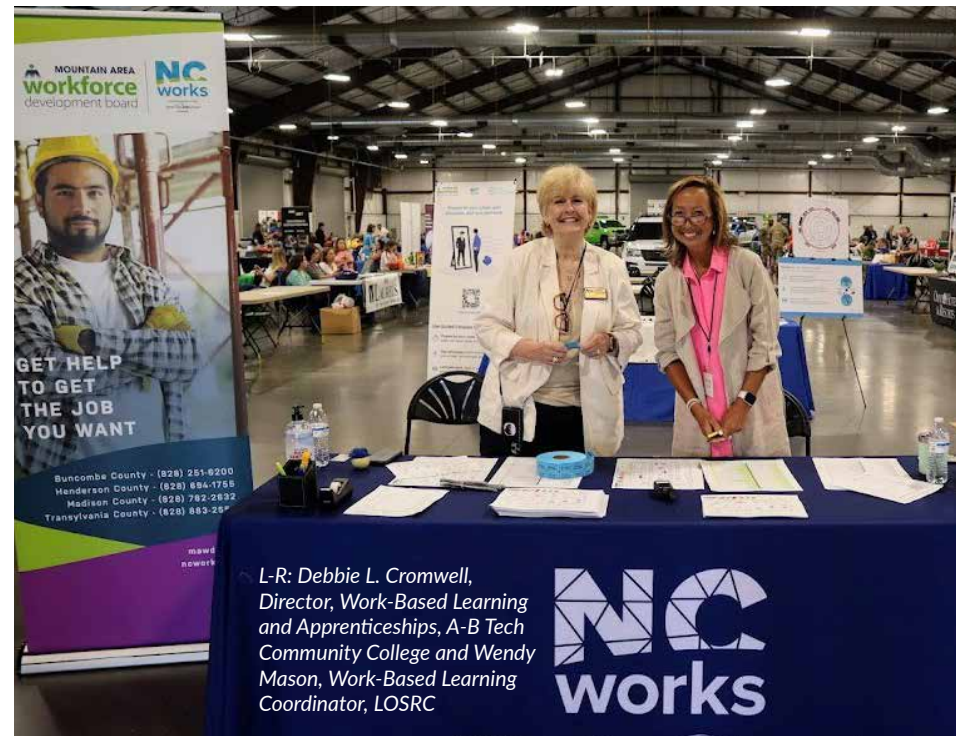
# JOB FAIRS

## MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Mountain Area Workforce Development Board in collaboration with the Asheville Chamber of Commerce hosts the WNC Career Expo twice a year. In March 2022 and March of 2023 the Expo was held at the WNC Agriculture Center. Over 125 employers participated at each fair with a job seeker attendance of 350 in 2022 and 500 in 2023. In addition, a third job fair was held in June 2023 at the Ag Center as a response to the closure of Pactive Evergreen in Haywood County. 125 employers participated and 350 job seekers attended. The NC Works Career Center-Asheville provided monthly company-based job fairs, and NC Works-Madison, Hendersonville and Transylvania provided several smaller-scale job fairs.



Pratt & Whitney Team



L-R: Debbie L. Cromwell, Director, Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships, A-B Tech Community College and Wendy Mason, Work-Based Learning Coordinator, LOSRC



# CONSTRUCTION CAREER DAY 2023

MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Construction Career Day is a collaborative event led by the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board and supported by the Southwest Workforce Development Board, K-12 high schools in 17 western NC counties, area community colleges and employers. This career exploration event provided hands-on activities for high school students offered by 50+ construction and skilled trades companies. The event was held at the Smoky Mountain Event Center in Haywood County on March 28-29, 2023. Approximately 400 students attended each day. Vannoy Construction, the presenting sponsor, along with 25+ additional sponsors provided **\$30,000** to host this event. Construction Career Day is planned for April 30 and May 1, 2024.



Keegan Brunmeier, Software and Web Development at AB\_Tech Community College



## IT CAREER PATHWAY

MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board's fourth career pathway was recognized by the NC Works Commission on May 10, 2023. The IT Career Pathway consists of information on career paths in software, hardware and customer support. The Pathway is used as an advising tool for staff in NC Works Centers and has led to development of the expansion of employer engagement, training offerings, and professional development events.

Pictured Left: CAT Excavator at the Construction Career Day - Photo Credit: Anna Hair

# FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM

AREA AGENCY ON AGING



The Foster Grandparent Program provides volunteer opportunities to persons aged 55 and older. Volunteers serve a minimum of five hours, up to a maximum of 40 hours per week, to provide social, emotional, and educational support to children in the classroom. Volunteers receive a small stipend, mileage reimbursement, as well as other benefits for their service. The volunteers also receive the added health benefits of living happier, healthier lives while making a difference in the community.

Foster Grandparents serve as tutors and mentors to young people with special and exceptional needs in schools, Head Start Centers, and day care centers. Foster Grandparents read with children, support their academic learning and social development, and help teachers by giving each child the time and attention they need. While sharing their wisdom and years of experience, they help guide children on a path to success. Put simply, Foster Grandparents give the kind of comfort and love that sets a child on the path toward a successful future.

- 25,069 hours served
- 35 volunteers
  - 33 Foster Grandparents served 16,115 hours at 4 schools, 1 Head Start, and 3 non-profit childcare centers in Buncombe County saving the county over **\$512,457**
  - One volunteer in Henderson County served 133 hours at one Head Start Center saving the county over **\$4,229**
  - Two volunteers in Transylvania County served 165 hours at one afterschool program saving the county over **\$5,274**
- 61 children served one-on-one
- Over 350 children were served indirectly as a result of having a Foster Grandparent in their classroom



Yvonne Dendy has been a Foster Grandparent volunteer for eleven years. Yvonne encompasses all that it means to be a Foster Grandparent—she is kind, loving, and always ready to brighten someone’s day with a smile and laugh. Elementary school teacher, Ms. Hancock, states that “Ms. Yvonne is an integral component to the success of our students. Her time, knowledge, and care enhances the student experience daily. Ms. Yvonne is a shining light in the students’ lives. The students adore her and are so comforted by her presence. All the students adore Ms. Yvonne. They greet her with hugs and she is a go to when they need assistance.”

Yvonne also serves on the Regional Aging Advisory Council.

**BUNCOMBE**



## WINTER CELEBRATION

In December, the volunteers of the Foster Grandparent Program were recognized with a winter celebration event. Volunteers were served hot cocoa by AAA staff members and there was a hot cocoa bar they could enjoy. Volunteers watched a holiday episode of the show *Nailed It!* and then had their own “Nailed It!” gingerbread decorating contest where groups of volunteers worked together to create their own gingerbread masterpieces. The winning gingerbread decorators received handmade “Nailed It!” crowns and bragging rights. There was lots of creativity and even more laughter. Volunteers were provided with a \$50 gift certificate to a local grocery store and received a reusable hot cup filled with chocolate, candy canes, and a packet of hot cocoa.

# SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING



The Senior Companion Program (SCP) engages adults, age 55 and over, to provide non-medical companionship and support to older adults. This allows older adults to “age in place” in their home and community. Senior Companion volunteers serve an average of 20 hours per week. Volunteers work in private homes and for local agencies.

Among other activities, they provide companionship to ease loneliness and social isolation, assist with transportation and light chores, help to serve as eyes and ears to professionals who can intervene in the case of medical or other deterioration on the part of the clients, and give support to informal caregivers. While serving, Senior Companion volunteers improve their own lives by staying physically and mentally active and civically engaged.

The Senior Companion Program is a federally funded grant program through AmeriCorp-Seniors that provides opportunities for seniors to make a difference in their community. Volunteers must meet income eligibility guidelines and receive a tax-free stipend of \$4/hour plus mileage reimbursements.

The Senior Companion Program enrolled ten new volunteers in FY23. The waitlist for a volunteer is now under 100 people. A grant was secured through Dogwood Health Trust to create a Support Specialist position with the program. This position has streamlined paperwork, placed wait list referrals, recruited new volunteers, and expanded professional in-service to multiple locations a month. With this added support, the Senior Companion Manager was able to apply for additional grants and complete new volunteer training and placements. Additionally, a new database was created for the program which incorporated an online filing and tracking system and helped the staff to envision the future capacity of the Senior Companion Program.

- 55,934 hours (about 6 and a half years) were spent by volunteers in service with clients and agencies
- Nine volunteers volunteer in agencies: Charles George VA Medical Center; Council on Aging of Buncombe County; Council on Aging for Henderson County; Madison County Department of Social Services, The Store House, and Jewish Family Services
- 60 volunteers work one on one with clients in their homes
- 248 clients
- 210 referrals from the region originally received and screened
- 85 older adults on a waitlist for services

### VOLUNTEER #S

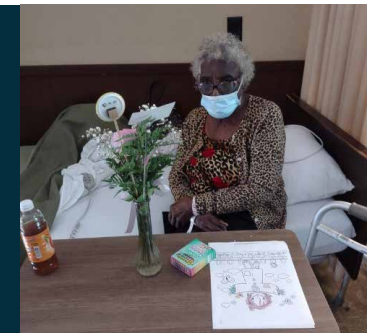
BC  
56

HC  
12

MC  
1

This year at the age of 90, Cecilia Miller retired from the Senior Companion Program after 27 years of service to clients in Buncombe County. She worked in the homes of many homebound older adults at both George Knight Homes at Skyland and Laurel Wood Apartments. She has served roughly over 28,000 hours. Cecilia now attends the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) several times a week. She is still active in her church and apartment community. She is now being cared for by another Senior Companion volunteer as the program comes full circle to help older adults remain independent, at home, as long as possible.

BUNCOMBE





A Matter of Balance Class



## COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS (CHW)

The Asheville Terrace Community Health Workers (ATCHW) Program is a community-based model addressing the complex needs of high-risk elders in subsidized senior housing. Community Health Workers are trusted peer leaders trained to provide culturally conscious care to high-risk, low-income senior housing communities. There is an emphasis on social connectivity, safety, physical activity, nutrition, and reducing social isolation. Services provided include food distributions, health education and exercise, access to on-site screenings and services (e.g., vaccine and flu shots), and home visits. This program is instrumental in addressing social isolation with opportunities for engagement and community volunteerism.

Asheville Terrace Community Health workers provide home visits to frail and homebound residents through the Neighbor Knock program offering health management support, neighborly visits, reassurance visits, and transportation assistance. Community service events include food, health events/health groups, and social events or groups. The “Neighbor Knock” program is essential for identifying and addressing challenges, including food insecurity, safety, and social isolation.

- 148 total events were held.
- 46 food distribution events in partnership with MANNA food bank which 1041 bags of groceries were provided to residents.
- 4232 home visits through the “Neighbor Knock Program.”
- 100 percent of participants received food through CHW-led food distributions, while 18% of the community received daily “Neighbor Knock” Services (in-person reassurance check).
- Approximately 20.4 % of participants are considered high utilizers of the Community Health Worker organized events with 60 out of 294 unique participants registered for 10+ service events.

BUNCOMBE

# HEALTH PROMOTION

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Based on research provided by the National Council on Aging, almost 95 percent of adults 60 and older have been diagnosed with at least one chronic condition, and 80 percent of older adults have two or more. These ongoing health issues can negatively influence individuals’ financial, social, emotional, and physical well-being when left unmanaged. One in four older adults will experience a fall in the next year, with the likelihood of a second fall increasing by 50 percent. The consequences of falling can be mild to extreme, with loss of independence and death being the most severe. Western North Carolina has become a hot spot for retirement, leading to the rapid growth of our older adult population. The rapid growth of the older adult population in the region challenges our current capacity for medical/health resources. Prevention, exercise, and Self-Management through evidence-based programming may help offset this high healthcare-utilizing demographic in local health systems and lead to better health outcomes and quality of life for participants.

The Area Agency on Aging provides education and coordination dedicated to regional evidence-based programming and fall prevention which includes Living Healthy with Chronic Disease, Living Healthy with Diabetes, Living Healthy with Chronic Pain, Diabetes Self-Management, A Matter of Balance, Walk with Ease, Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention, and Bingocize. Additionally, the AAA has increased the number of volunteer leaders for program delivery by providing and funding training and certifications across all program platforms and increasing program delivery. The Area Agency on Aging works to effectively disseminate evidence-based programs and build capacity through the enlistment of support from diverse stakeholders in the medical, educational, non-profit, and for-profit sectors.

- 17 evidence-based health program workshops offered.
- 120 program registrants and 74 percent program completion rate.
- 21 new volunteers trained and certified across five programming disciplines.

# OUTREACH AND RESOURCE ASSISTANCE

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Starting in September 2022, the Area Agency on Aging received funds from the state American Rescue Plan Act funds (ARPA) funding to conduct outreach targeting older adults aged 60 and older or persons acting on their behalf to provide information on existing services. This outreach is to target unserved and marginalized older adults. The funding has helped offer a targeted effort on outreach by giving a staff member to be the point person on outreach efforts. The Area Agency on Aging has seen a sizable difference in the number and a more directed outreach effort with this funding allowing staff to schedule more in-person presentations, participation in community events, and coordinating staff to attend events on behalf of Land of Sky.



L-R: Carol Allison MFP Community Inclusion Specialist and Dee Heinmuller, Senior Companion Program Manager

### 1,935 BUNCOMBE

People reached with presentations, community events (World Elder Abuse Awareness Walk) and working with Council on Aging Buncombe County.

### 938 HENDERSON

People reached with presentations, information table at public library, and connection with Henderson County Council on Aging/ Meals on Wheels.

### 645 MADISON

People reached with community events at libraries and Mars Hill University, and connection with the nutrition sites throughout Madison County.

### 410 TRANSYLVANIA

People reached with partnerships through WNCSource, Silvermont Senior Center, and Quebec Community Center as well as community events.

### 703 REGIONAL

Some outreach reached beyond one county with answering phone calls, presentations with programs that have residents in different counties, and additionally we reached around 14,000 via our Facebook page and sent out our WNC Aging Updates newsletter twice a month with around 450 subscribers.

# ARPA

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Area Agency on Aging received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to aide in the recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding continues to be utilized within the region with an end date of September 30, 2024. This funding was allocated in the previous fiscal year and the providers are utilizing funds in the following ways for FY23:

- Nutrition providers in all four counties have been able to offer additional congregate and home delivered meals as well as developing ways to better serve the nutrition clients such as culturally targeted meals for the Latin X community, fresh produce boxes, and shelf stable meals.
- Housing Assistance Corporation extended services into Transylvania County.
- WNC Source created an incontinence supply closet to assist clients by giving them adult diapers, wipes, and other supplies that can be cost prohibitive.
- Council on Aging for Henderson County received funding for information and options counseling which has facilitated their organization to be the hub of aging information and resources for Henderson County.
- Council on Aging of Buncombe County continues to offer their chore and chore enhanced program where older adults receive assistance with cleaning, yard work, and other home repairs that housing and home improvement services do not cover.
- Jewish Family Services of Western North Carolina offers virtual mental health counseling across the region.

# LOCAL CONTACT AGENCY (CRC/LCA)

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Land of Sky Regional Council contracted with Council on Aging of Buncombe County to facilitate the use of Local Contact Agency (LCA) funds from the Department of Health and Human Services. LCA uses a person-centered approach to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to learn about home and community-based services and to receive long term care in the least restrictive setting possible. In FY23, Council on Aging responded to 23 residents.

# MIPPA

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) funding is used to help Medicare beneficiaries better understand Medicare coverage, options, and benefits. LOSRC contracted with the Council on Aging of Buncombe County to carry out MIPPA services. The award amount for FY23 was \$30,736.



# FAN / HEAT RELIEF

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Operation Fan/Heat Relief is a special emergency assistance project to help elderly North Carolinians cope with summer heat. The project began in 1986. Funding assistance is available May through September of each year. This project is made possible by \$5,429 in contributions from Duke Energy Foundation and Progress Energy Services Company, LLC.

Because many elderly citizens do not have electric fans or air conditioners, they are highly susceptible to life-threatening situations, which could be avoided if they were able to remain cool. The fans that are collected and purchased through "Operation Fan / Heat Relief" are given to those elderly citizens who have the greatest need for relief from the heat. The fans are distributed by one local provider in each county and are given as a gift - they are not to be loaned or retrieved at the end of the summer.

BC  
FANS/AC  
71/10

HC  
FANS  
37

MC  
FANS  
14

TC  
FANS  
12

# MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Money Follows the Person (MFP) is a state project that helps NC Medicaid-eligible North Carolinians living in inpatient facilities move into their own homes and communities with supports. Land of Sky Regional Council houses two roles with the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project: The Community Inclusion Specialist and the Transitions Coordinators.

The Community Inclusion Specialist provides education, outreach, and support to increase awareness and utilization of the program. The Transitions Coordinator performs complex, professional work to assist people with chronic conditions and disabilities as they move from institutions back into the community using community-based services and support.

### THE COMMUNITY INCLUSION SPECIALIST:

- Staff covers 37 counties including 170 skilled nursing facilities. This includes 28 facilities in Region B.
- Staff have contacted all facilities via phone, email, and in person to provide education and support.
- Staff provided outreach at community events in all counties for Region B.
- Staff provided education to counties' department of Social Services for Buncombe and Henderson counties.
- In FY22, 73 out of 170 skilled nursing facilities had turnover in their Social Services Director position. This provided opportunities for education of program.
- Staff provided webinar training for skilled nursing and social services staff for all counties. Offering program training both in-person and virtually has increased attendance.

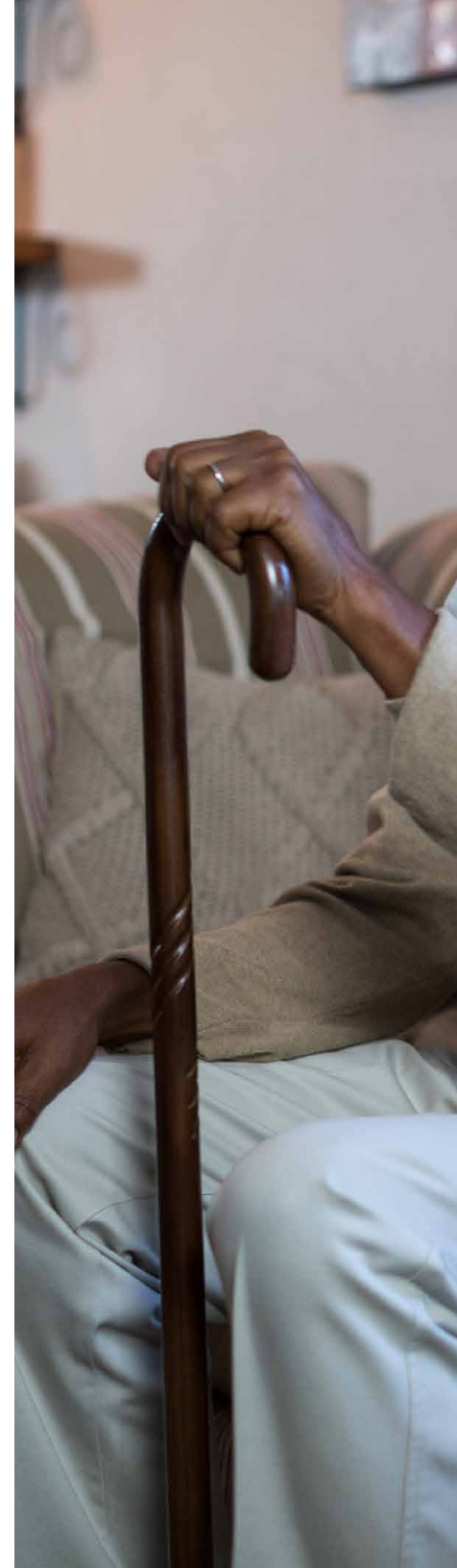
### MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON TRANSITION COORDINATORS:

Two full time transition coordinators serve a total of 15 counties. From July to December 2022, all 15 counties were covered by one transition coordinator. In November 2022, a second transition coordinator was hired and began employment in January 2023. One transition coordinator serves the western region which includes the following nine counties: Mitchell, Yancey, Rutherfordton, Transylvania, Buncombe, Madison, McDowell, Polk, and Henderson. The other transition coordinator serves the central region, which includes five counties: Forsyth, Davie, Davidson, Surry, Yadkin, and Stokes.

The western counties had a total of four transitions and 31 referrals for the fiscal year, and the central counties had a total of seven transitions and 22 referrals for the fiscal year. The transition rate was 3.2% in the western counties and 9.4% in the central counties. The median number of days it takes to transition is 200 days in the western counties and 210 days in the central counties. A total of 30 participants withdrew from Money Follows the Person for various reasons such as they did not have an informal support system, high Medicaid deductible, or it was determined they could not live in the community safely and independently.

There were times this fiscal year the western coordinator had a caseload of 23 people in which 20 needed safe affordable housing. Individuals can spend months, even years, searching and waiting for acceptable housing to become available. With the housing crisis people are passing away in long-term care facilities waiting for housing to become available.

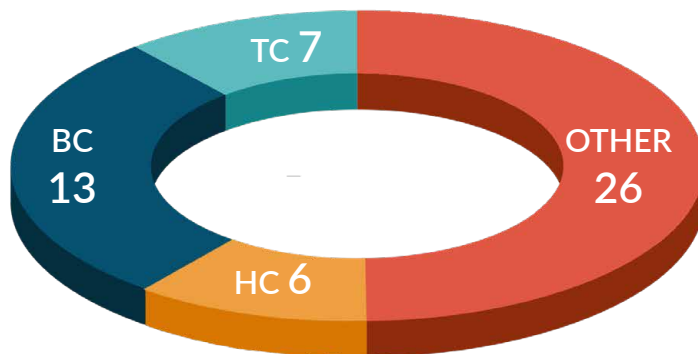
The transition coordinators do not have access to place people into housing, but they can make referrals to the few housing programs that are available, although most of these have very long waitlists. When it comes to public housing there is not one housing project that does not have a waiting list. For example, in Buncombe County the Section 8 HUD program has a wait list of five to ten years, and they have stopped accepting applications at this time. The Forsyth County Section 8 waitlist has been closed (meaning they are no longer accepting applications) for several years due to the number of people waiting. This is true for many of the other counties that the transition coordinator serves.



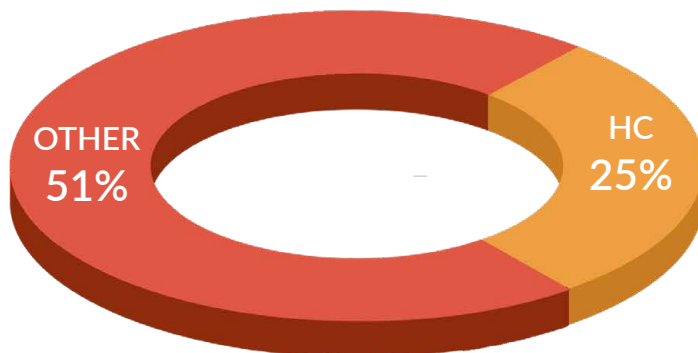




### # MFP REFERRALS BY FACILITY COUNTY



### % OF MFP REFERRALS BY COUNTY THAT LED TO TRANSITION



The western transition coordinator worked with a 46-year-old that had a car wreck and became a paraplegic that was restrained to a wheelchair. He was able to transfer (move from the bed to his wheelchair by himself) and complete many of his daily living activities on his own. He had a son and daughter that was assisting him but did not have the means for their father to move in with them.

The transition coordinator assisted him in obtaining a Section 8 voucher. He had his voucher for 60-days and could not locate a landlord that would accept the voucher. He renewed his voucher for 60 more days struggling to find a landlord that would accept his voucher. The transition coordinator was able to secure a landlord that would accept the voucher on a Tuesday. Unfortunately, the staff at the facility walked in his room early on the following Saturday to only find he had passed away in his sleep. He had been waiting over a year for housing to become available to him..

Even when housing is available, there are still other hurdles that must be overcome in order for a successful transition to occur. The central region transition coordinator has been working with a gentleman who owns his home in Gaston County. Although he is currently staying in a facility in Forsyth County, they are one of three facilities in all of North Carolina that can handle a patient on a ventilator. "Joe" has been at the facility since 2021. He has support at home who is willing to assist as his caregiver. However, home based community services do not cover 24-hour care. Instead, they are intended to supplement family caregiving/support. Due to the distance from his home, transportation needed for assessments for community services that need to take place in his home county is extraordinary expensive. Because of his condition, Joe would require ambulance transportation. The transition coordinator, the facility staff, and Joe have been working on some sort of arrangement to come together to cover the costs. Joe continues to remain hopeful and continues to work towards getting home! Here he is proudly sitting in a chair for the first time in years.



# COVID-19 OUTREACH

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Area Agency on Aging received funding from the State of North Carolina to help combat the uneven distribution of Covid-19 resources, information, and support for older North Carolinians. The funding was a year grant starting in October 2021. This program's goal was to reach historically marginalized older adults including those individuals who are homebound, live in rural communities, and on limited income. Below are the numbers of people reach from July 2022 until the end of the funding September 2022.

### BUNCOMBE

3,060 people reach via outreach events and handouts to nutrition sites with Council on Aging and other community events. We also ran radio ads that reached about 430,000.

### HENDERSON

Henderson County: 1,300 people reach via outreach events, being present at public libraries, and other programs like Meals on Wheels. We also ran a few newspaper ads reaching around 10,000.

### MADISON

Madison County: Working with Kepro Community Health Workers and through radio ads reaching about 1,245.

### TRANSYLVANIA

Transylvania County: 1,288 working with Silvermont and Quebec Meal sites and Meals on Wheels. Also using radio ads with WSQL reach around 30,000.

### OTHER

Other outreach efforts that did not have a specific county reached 880. Along with giving out over 1,000 free at-home COVID rapid testing kits.

27 Facebook posts, 5 WNC aging newsletter update reaching around 400 with each newsletter.

Total 526,724 with being "direct" 5,585

# LTC OMBUDSMAN

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is mandated through the Older Americans Act and funded by the Administration of Community Living. A Long Term Care Ombudsman serves as a mediator who seeks to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of people living in long-term care facilities. The Ombudsman provides a way for people to voice their concerns and have their complaints addressed. The Ombudsman works with all parties to resolve a problem.

### REGIONAL

**57** CLOSED COMPLAINTS WITH **32** CLOSED CASES

| Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Training Hours |            |
|---|------------|
| Buncombe  | 77         |
| Henderson   | 166        |
| Madison   | 0 - No CAC |
| Transylvania                                      | 7          |

| Closed Complaints |    |
|-------------------|----|
| Buncombe          | 18 |
| Henderson         | 37 |
| Madison           | 0  |
| Transylvania      | 2  |

| Closed Cases |    |
|--------------|----|
| Buncombe     | 12 |
| Henderson    | 19 |
| Madison      | 0  |
| Transylvania | 1  |

| Advocacy and General Information (AGI) |     |
|--|-----|
| Buncombe                               | 762 |
| Henderson                              | 703 |
| Madison                                | 31  |
| Transylvania                           | 133 |

| Benefits/Rights/Regulations (AGI type) |     |
|--|-----|
| Buncombe                               | 319 |
| Henderson                              | 319 |
| Madison                                | 14  |
| Transylvania                           | 48  |



# COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEES

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Members are local citizens appointed by the County Commissioners to serve on the committee as volunteers. They are selected because of their interest in ensuring the quality of care of nursing home and adult care home residents.

The purpose of CACs is to:

- Speak with residents in long term care communities to find out if there are any resident rights concerns.
- Promote community involvement with nursing homes, adult care homes, and their residents.
- Promote community education and awareness of the needs of residents in nursing and adult care homes.

## WHY I VOLUNTEER

HENDERSON

My background is in special education, both as a teacher and administrator. My wife is a pediatric physical therapist. We ended up living in Raleigh and my parents moved from California to Pinehurst to be closer to us and to play golf. My mom had a minor stroke and my dad took responsibility for providing what assistance she needed. As time went on, I worried about how my parents could continue managing a house and themselves without assistance.

When I suggested they move to Raleigh into an assisted living facility, my dad stubbornly denied he needed assistance but did agree to move to Raleigh. I found an apartment complex near our home that catered to senior citizens. When they toured the place, they agreed to move there. Their house sold quickly and they settled into their apartment. With some assistance from me along with the services provided for the renters, they managed to live independently.

A year later my dad began experiencing some health issues which limited his involvement with mom. At the same time we were in the beginning process of having a house built for us in Hendersonville. We sold our house and decided to rent a large house in Raleigh to accommodate the four of us. We all moved in and spent two years together until our house was completed.

Those two years were challenging for my wife and me. Three months prior to our move to Hendersonville my dad died. Hospice was involved for about 3 weeks prior to his death. Fortunately, I retired about that time so I could take care of mom. When we moved into our new house my mom lived with us for 6 months before my wife and I realized we couldn't continue caring for her because she needed constant supervision. I located a wonderful assisted living facility in Hendersonville where mom lived for close to two years.

I made it a practice to visit her twice a week and to talk with the director and staff. When her health began to decline, I contacted Four Seasons Hospice and soon after she was moved to the Elizabeth House. We are fortunate to have the Four Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care facility in our area. A few weeks after her death, I made the decision to hold a celebration of her life at the assisted living facility because the staff were fond of her and she had outlived all her friends. The director of the facility was pleasantly surprised at my decision. The staff were also pleased. I was told we were the first family to hold a celebration of the life of a former resident. It turned out to be a wonderful party for the staff and a few close friends of ours.

When I saw an ad in the paper requesting volunteers to join the Nursing/Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee, I immediately followed up on the application process and agreed to attend the training for potential committee members. I did so due to my own experience dealing with my aging parents.

I feel a strength of our committee is spending time talking to residents. We tell them we are volunteers advocating for them and ask them some basic questions to get them to feel comfortable talking to us. Based on their responses along with our observations we provide the Director or designated person in charge a report of our visit. We do not provide names of the residents we talked to unless we have their permission. If we have any negative findings to report, we ask that those issues be resolved. When we return, we check to see that those issues have been corrected. Serving on this committee provides me with a good feeling of accomplishment and joy. I know how I felt when I visited my mom. If I had any concerns prior to leaving the facility, I shared those concerns with the director or charge person. And when I returned, I made sure my concerns had been addressed. Fortunately, that was seldom an issue. Many residents don't have family or friends advocating for them. And that is why our committee is so crucial.

- Ron Howard, Henderson County Nursing/Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee

# SENIOR TAR HEEL LEGISLATURE

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature (NCSTHL) was created as a nonpartisan, unicameral body by the North Carolina General Assembly with the passage of Senate Bill 479 in July of 1993. Its purpose is to identify the most pressing issues facing older adults across the state and propose new legislation that will improve their quality of life to the NC General Assembly. The NCSTHL is comprised of delegates and alternates representing each of North Carolina's 100 counties, supported by the Area Agencies on Aging serving the state's sixteen service areas.

Each of North Carolina's 100 counties appoints one delegate and one alternate to the NCSTHL for a two-year term. These individuals are 60 years of age or older, reside in the county they represent and are volunteers from all walks of life.

Buncombe County: Delegate Susan Schiemer

Madison County: Delegate Sherrye Perry, Alternate: O'Neal Shelton

The NCSTHL's five Legislative Priorities for consideration by the NC General Assembly in the 2023-24 legislative cycle, were:

1. Allocate an additional \$8 million in recurring funds for Adult Protective Services to address staff shortages.
3. Increase the Senior Center General Purpose Appropriation by \$1,265,316 in recurring funds.
5. Allocate an additional \$8 million in recurring funds for the Home and Community Care Block Grant.
7. Allocate an additional \$1.5 million in recurring funds for 11 additional long-term care ombudsmen.
9. Strengthen long-term care staffing standards.

2023 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the authorization of Senate Bill 479 and thirty years of positive impact on behalf of older adults across the state. A state-wide celebration took place in June 2023 at the Museum of History in Raleigh, NC.

*Senator Ralph Hise and Madison County Senior Tar Heel Delegate, Sherrye Perry*



# FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Family Caregiver Program assists family caregivers primarily with funding for paying someone to spend time with their loved one while the caregiver can run errands, go to medical appointments, or do something fun and relaxing (respite). Other assistance is also provided for support groups and supplemental services such as providing incontinence supplies. Most of the funding is contracted out to agencies like Councils on Aging who provide direct services to Family Caregivers in Region B.

This year, staff provided direct service to family caregivers in Transylvania County. One example includes respite funding that helped a mother spend her remaining days at home on the property in Brevard that has been in her family for multiple generations. Her son and daughter-in-law would spend days and nights assisting their mother. Nights were more difficult because their mother did not sleep through the night and had to get up multiple times to use the restroom. Respite funds helped the son and daughter-in-law hire a friend they have watched grow up to spend a couple of nights a week with their mother to allow them to get a good night's rest so they could be refreshed and be better caregivers. During this past year, their mother's health steadily declined, and she passed away at her home with her family present. The family thanked the staff for the funds to allow their mother to spend the rest of her life at home.

TRANSYLVANIA



# PROJECT C.A.R.E

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Western Office of Project C.A.R.E (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty) received **\$42,854** from the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services to fund respite care services for dementia caregivers in fifteen WNC counties. This amount is **\$26,909** less than the program received in the previous year. Fortunately, American Rescue Plan Act funds nearly made up the difference by providing **\$25,188** for Land of Sky's four counties. Of the **\$68,042** combined amount, **\$41,645** went to 38 caregivers in the four counties served by Land of Sky.

**BUNCOMBE - \$23,953**

22 Caregivers

**MADISON - \$3,769**

5 Caregivers

**HENDERSON - \$9,927**

8 Caregivers

**TRANSYLVANIA - \$3,996**

3 Caregivers

These dollars enabled family caregivers caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia to take a break from caregiving to tend to their own healthcare needs, spend time with other family members and friends, take mini vacations, get some exercise, and participate in other forms of self-care. In addition, Project C.A.R.E. provided care consultation services and referrals to other agencies such as the councils on aging, the county departments of health and human services, MemoryCare, VA Medical Center, MountainCare Adult Day Care, etc. and to other resources such as the North Carolina Caregiver Portal.

Peter and Polly Gott arrived in Madison County as young people in 1961 from New York. Peter had studied chemistry at Cornell University and Polly had graduated from the Brooklyn School of Art. They were drawn to the region by the love of its music. They settled in (their first home was a shack) and raised a couple of children, Susi and her brother, Tim. Peter played banjo, sang and danced, repaired musical instruments and became widely known not only for his music but for his expertise in building log cabins using traditional methods. Polly took up pottery, basketry and watercolor painting. Together they grew, harvested, and preserved their own food. These days, they still live in the cabin they built many years ago on a 218-acre property adjacent to the Pisgah National Forest that is protected by a conservation easement with the Sothern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy. Susi and Tim each have homes on the property. Peter has now lost much of his independence due to illness but his daughter, Susi, has stepped up to provide the care he needs along with some help from her brother, Tim. Project C.A.R.E. has assisted this family by providing caregiver respite funds and care consultation services.

MADISON



Photo Credit: Rob Amberg

# HOME & COMMUNITY CARE BLOCK GRANT

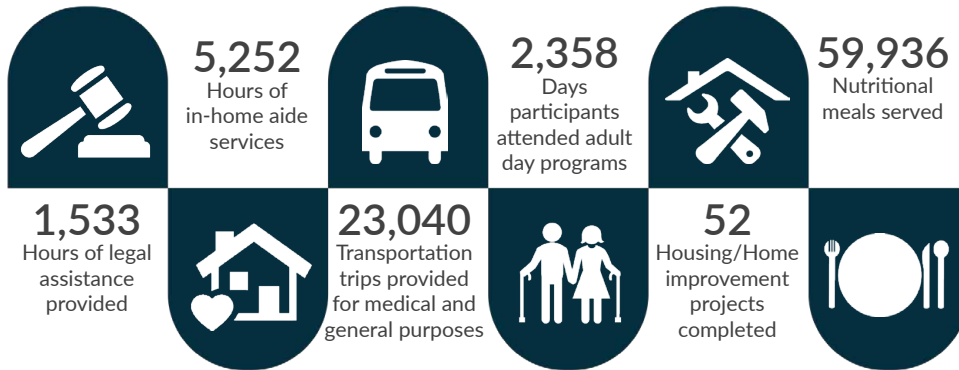
## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) became effective July 1, 1992 through North Carolina General Statute 143B-181.1(a)(11). The HCCBG programs are intended to encourage and maintain independence for persons over 60 as well as provide protection for older adults. The funds that support the HCCBG programs come from county, state, and federal funds. The federal funds are provided through the Older Americans Act that was created in 1965.

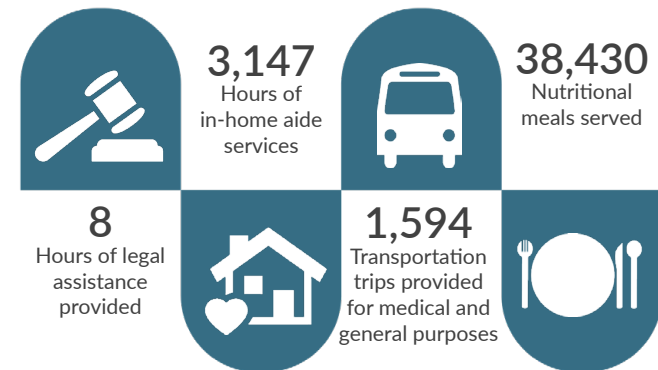
The block grant gives County Commissioners maximum discretion in deciding how aging funds will be administered and budgeted in the county. By endorsing a local Funding Plan, Boards of County Commissioners will define the services to be provided, determine funding levels for services, and identify the community service providers to be involved with providing Home and Community Care Block Grant services. In addition to giving counties increased decision-making authority for planning and delivering aging services, the block grant is also intended to achieve the following goals:

- promote the visibility and importance of aging programs locally,
- establish a single set of policies and procedures for in-home and community-based services provided with block grant funds, and
- provide for an equitable distribution of funds to each county consistent with the requirements of the Older Americans Act.

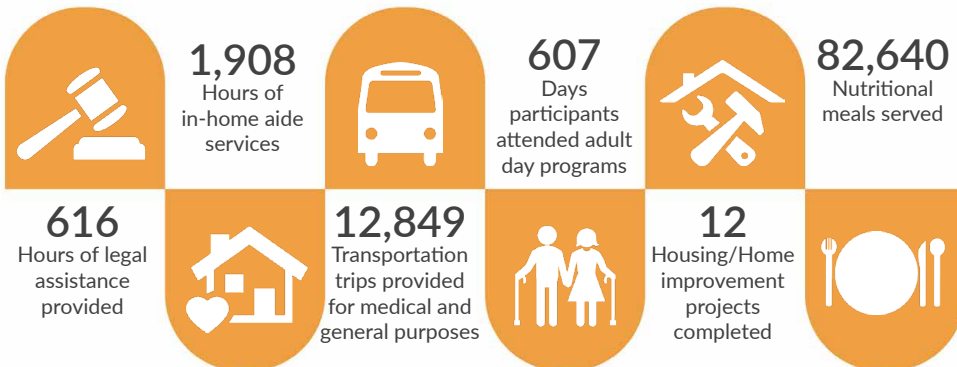
### BUNCOMBE - \$1,725,585



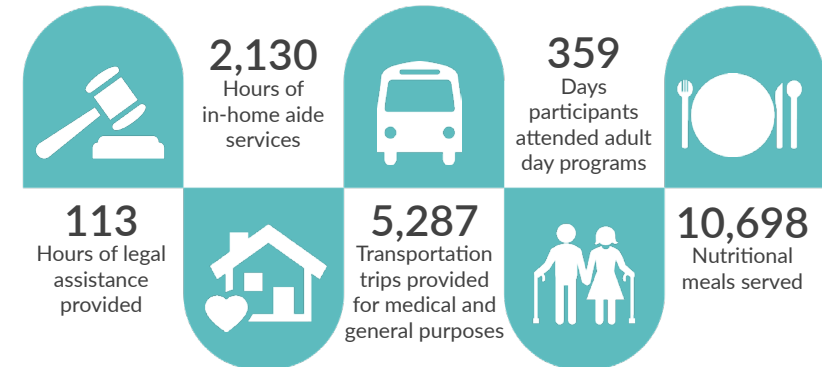
### MADISON - \$240,279



### HENDERSON - \$833,215



### TRANSYLVANIA - \$284,115



# AWARDS

## LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

### NADO AWARDS

Bridging the Digital Divide - A Western North Carolina Digital Inclusion Plan  
Livable Appalachia Summit  
Tunnel Road Corridor Study

### THE CHARLES H. CAMPBELL REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Barbara Volk, City of Hendersonville Mayor

### THE ROBERT C. PARRISH, SR. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AWARD

George Morosani, Economic Development

### THE ROBERT E. SHEPHERD EXCELLENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Josh Harold, Town of Black Mountain Manager

### EXTRAORDINARY PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS

Al Whiteside, Buncombe County Commissioner  
Norris Gentry, Madison County Commissioner, Interim Madison County Manager, Vice Chair LOSRC Board of Delegates

Van Taylor Jones, Buncombe County Emergency Management Director  
Jimmy Brissie, Henderson County Emergency Management Director  
Caleb Dispenza, Madison County Emergency Management Director  
Kevin Shook, Transylvania County Emergency Management Director

### EXTRAORDINARY LEGISLATIVE SERVICE AWARDS

Senator Chuck Edwards  
Representative John Ager  
Representative Susan Fisher  
Representative Brian Turner

# AWARDS LUNCHEON

## MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

### WIOA BUSINESS PARTNERS IN THE MAWDB REGION

Jabil, Inc. - NCWorks Career Center Henderson County  
New Excelsior - NCWorks Career Center- Transylvania County  
Hot Springs Health Program - NCWorks Career Center-Madison County

### NCWORKS NEXTGEN YOUTH PROGRAMS

Haley Petit - Goodwill NWNC  
Tom White - Mountain Area Regional Business Services  
Adrienne Ducharme - Henderson County Public Schools

### NCWORKS & WIOA ADULT & DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

Iken Wallace - Mountain Area Regional Business Services  
Holly McBride - Mountain Area Regional Business Services  
Reco Mosley - NCWorks Career Center Asheville  
Jennifer Keeter-NCWorks Career Center - Henderson County  
Wyatt Broyles - NCWorks Career Center - Madison County  
Desiree Chambliss - NCWorks Career Center Transylvania County

### MAWDS REGIONAL BUSINESS SERVICES - EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Devil's Foot Beverages - Mountain Area Regional Business Services  
Survival Innovations - Mountain Area Regional Business Services

### DEB HOLEBROOKS OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD

Dianne Ables - NCWorks Career Center Asheville

### MOUNTAIN LOCAL AREA SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce - Workforce Development Collaboration  
Dr. Abraham Pallas, PhD - The MAWDB Leadership Award.  
Jonathan Szucs - The Bill Ragland Award  
Brock Ashburn & Himanshu Karvir - NCWorks Commission Private Sector Members  
Dr. Tony Baldwin, Ed.D & Dr. John Bryant, Ed.D - Retired Superintendents in the local area



### CAROL MCLIMANS TRAILBLAZER AWARD

Roxann Sizemore, Buncombe County Department of Social Services

Roxann Sizemore received the seventh annual Trailblazer Award on Wednesday, May 24, 2023. The award is given annually to a professional in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, or Transylvania Counties who is a pioneer and innovator in the field of aging and adult services. Roxann's service to the region spans 45 plus years. She served 10 years at the Madison County Department of Social Services then served 35 years at Buncombe County Department of Social Services. Roxann was the driver and developer of many of the programs that are now run on an annual basis, including: the Elder Abuse Awareness Day event and the annual Wish Tree.



# DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL



Land of Sky Regional Council names Erica Anderson as Deputy Director in addition to her duties as Economic and Community Development Director. Ms. Anderson has been employed by Land of Sky Regional Council since 2010 and she has been the Economic and Community Development Director since 2013. Ms. Anderson will lead the Council's strategic planning process and local government relationships as the Deputy Director. As the Economic and Community Development Director she oversees over 15 employees who work in Economic Development, Community Development, Local Government Services and Transportation Planning.

Ms. Anderson earned her Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science and a Minor in Natural Resource Economics from Colorado State University. She has a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Ms. Anderson is a member of the American Planning Association, American Institute of Certified Planners, and the NC Economic Developers Association. She has received numerous awards and honors during her professional career.

"I appreciate the opportunity to take on the role as Deputy Director in addition to my role as Economic and Community Development Director at Land of Sky Regional Council. We want to provide the best possible services to our region's local governments and to increase our region's economic opportunities. I'm proud of the work we do at the Council and I look forward to working with Nathan and our leadership team to do even more for the communities we serve," says Erica Anderson, Deputy Director/Economic and Community Development Director at Land of Sky Regional Council.

"We are excited that Erica will be serving as our Deputy Director. She does an outstanding job as our Economic and Community Development Director and I am confident Erica will excel in this new role. I've asked Erica to take on this additional role because of her outstanding performance, her many talents and her resolute passion for our region. Erica will help us make Land of Sky Regional Council a higher performing organization. The Council has a history of accomplishment that is nationally recognized and I believe our best days are ahead," says Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director of Land of Sky Regional Council.

# HOLIDAY SERVICE PROJECT

LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

One of the best parts of the holiday season is assisting others with their holiday needs. Every year, staff provide and collect donations for a service project. Projects have varied from grandparents raising grandchildren, group children's home residents, elderly family caregivers, long term care facility residents, or low income families.

This year, the Land of Sky team delivered food collected for the MANNA Backpack Buddies program. The donations totaled a whopping 502 pounds! The MANNA volunteers who helped unload were overwhelmed and brought a forklift to take everything inside! As a general rule, 1.2 meals are generated from every pound of food donated, but that number is higher for the Backpack Buddies!



# STAFF

## LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

### LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

#### ADMINISTRATION

Nathan Ramsey - Executive Director  
Erica Anderson - Deputy Executive Director  
Christina Giles - Administration and Communications Director  
Asha Rado - Administrative Support Specialist

#### FINANCE

Patricia Rosenberg - Finance Director  
Sherry Christenson - Payroll and Finance Coordinator  
Wanda Clark - Accounting Assistant  
Melissa Lindsey - Accounts Receivable Clerk  
Kim Ward - Accounts Payable Clerk

Phyllis Utley - The Remembrance Project Program Coordinator

### TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE CENTER

#### TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE CENTER

Vicki Jennings - Strategic Initiatives Director

#### MOUNTAIN MOBILITY

Samantha Case - Transportation Specialist  
Charlie Lee - Transportation Specialist  
Heather Roberts-VanSickle - Transportation Specialist

#### NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAID TRANSPORTATION (NEMT)

Glenda Brown - NEMT Manager  
Diana Boone - NEMT Specialist  
Tanya Carver - NEMT Specialist  
LeChelle Fore - NEMT Specialist

### MOUNTAIN AREA workforce development board

#### MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Nathan Ramsey - MAWDB Director  
Barbara Darby - Assistant Workforce Director / Regional Business Services Leader

Marc Czarnecki - Business Services Representative  
Wendy Mason - Work-Based Learning Coordinator  
Brandon Priester - Regional Services Representative, Youth  
Zia Rifkin - Workforce Finance Manager  
Melissa Wright - Workforce Operations Director

#### P20 COUNCIL

Emily Nicholson - P20 Council Director  
Melissa Zenz - P20 Council Community Engagement & Data Management Specialist

### AREA AGENCY ON AGING

#### AREA AGENCY ON AGING

LeeAnne Tucker - Area Agency on Aging Director  
Carol Allison - MFP Community Inclusion Specialist  
Vicki Benavides - SCP Support Specialist  
Donna Case - Long Term Care Ombudsman  
Kathryn Florack - MFP Transitions Coordinator  
Stacy Friesland - Foster Grandparent Program Manager  
Dee Heinmuller - Senior Companion Program (SCP) Manager  
Pat Hilgendorf - Caregiver Program Associate  
Ginger Hill - MFP Transitions Coordinator  
Nancy Hogan - Project C.A.R.E. Manager  
Edward Jones - Family Caregiver Specialist  
Brea Kuykendall - Aging Program Specialist, Health Promotion  
Carol McLimans - Caregiver Program Associate  
Zack Schmitt - Aging Program Specialist, Contracts  
Cori Search - Long Term Care Ombudsman  
Jenna Sharrits - Aging Program Specialist, Outreach  
Donna Thomason - Long Term Care Ombudsman

**ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Erica Anderson - ECD Director  
 Mary Roderick - Planning Director  
 Sara Nichols - Energy & Economic Development Manager  
 Ian Baillie - Regional Planner  
 Jon Beck - GIS Coordinator  
 Kayla DiCristina - Regional Planner  
 Kaitland Finkle - Regional Planner  
 Erin Hughes - AmeriCorps Resilience Project Coordinator  
 Paul Moon - Regional Planner  
 Kelsey Owle - Community Engagement Liaison  
 Traci Thompson - Regional Planner  
 Kennedy Young - Lead for North Carolina Fellow

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

Tristan Winkler - French Broad River MPO Director  
 Vicki Eastland - Land of Sky RPO Director  
 Hannah Bagli - Transportation Planner  
 Jon Barsanti - Transportation Demand Management Coordinator  
 Logan DiGiacomo - Transportation Planner  
 Ada Sloop - Regional Safe Routes to School Coordinator

**WASTE REDUCTION PARTNERS**

Terry Albrecht - Waste Reduction Partners Director\*  
 Jan Hardin - Solid Waste Manager  
 Tom Kimmell - Water Programs Manager  
 Kimberly Van Niekerk - Energy Program Manager  
 \*NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Employee

**CLIENT SERVICES**

Vicki Jennings - Strategic Initiatives Director  
 Brandon Manson - Peer Support Programs Director

**INSPIRE RECOVERY TO CAREERS**

Melissa Berretta - INspire Peer Support Specialist  
 Rick Montgomery - INspire Peer Support Specialist  
 Dillon Moss - INspire Project Liaison  
 Antony Sluder - INspire Peer Support Specialist  
 Amanda Von Litolf - INspire Peer Support Specialist

**GO PLACES**

Gene Ettison - GO PLACES Project Director  
 Erika Bowman - GO PLACES Project Coordinator

**TRANSITIONS TO COMMUNITY LIVING**

Chip Hall - TCL Peer Extender  
 Haltson Fisher - TCL Peer Extender  
 Jerry Pharr - TCL Peer Extender

**HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES**

Dalton Buckner - Transportation Finance Specialist  
 Jane Pies - Transportation Specialist

**LEADERSHIP TEAM**



Erica Anderson



Glenda Brown



Gene Ettison



Christina Giles



Vicki Jennings



Nathan Ramsey



Patricia Rosenberg



LeeAnne Tucker



Tristan Winkler



# LAND<sub>of</sub>SKY

REGIONAL COUNCIL

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