



Centralina Council of Governments

2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT

Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG)

is a regional council of cities, towns and counties working together to help local governments in this region to grow jobs and the economy, improve quality of life and control the cost of government. Centralina provides services that enable local governments to address the local and regional challenges that affect them; get up-to-date regional, state and federal information and best practices; save money; access grant funds, and better position themselves for long-term economic health. We are one of 16 state-designated councils of government with this responsibility in North Carolina.

CCOG IN 10 WORDS

“Providing practical strategies and programs producing positive results for communities”

– Jim Prosser,
Executive Director
Centralina Council
of Governments

PLANNING

The Planning Department supports local governments through training, facilitation, planning, and direct service delivery in the areas of land use, transportation, healthy communities, regional mapping and data, energy, and the environment. The three-year CONNECT Our Future project developed a Regional Framework for Growth through the participation of more than 8,400 residents, businesses, and stakeholders. This framework includes consensus-based growth priorities and concepts and close to 80 tools for local governments to use in meeting their local growth related goals. Many of the activities in Fiscal Year 2014-2015 represent direct execution of the recommendations and priorities outlined in the CONNECT Our Future project.

Significant activities include:

■ **Regional Freight Mobility Plan** – The efficient, reliable and safe movement of goods and commodities by the Greater Charlotte region’s freight transportation system is critical to the continued growth and success of our regional economy. Centralina COG began work on the region’s first Freight Mobility plan in collaboration with public and private sector freight partners. The plan will provide the transportation planning organizations and local governments with recommendations and metrics to guide investments and policies that support the region’s growing economy. Additionally, through the planning process the project will establish a solid collaborative decision-making process and network of public and private partners to help guide the region’s infrastructure investments and meet the demand for an efficient, reliable and safe freight transportation system.

The new Centralina Health Solutions Center combines Planning and Aging Department research, training and services to assist local governments and others to improve community health and quality of life at all stages of life.

■ **Metrolina Region CommunityViz Initiative** – Utilizing the scenario planning model from CONNECT Our Future, the CommunityViz Initiative is developing a method for allocating population and employment data across Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs) in order to create a consistent, efficient, and replicable approach across the region. This data is primarily used by the Regional Travel Demand Model to inform transportation priorities, but is also creating a consistent data set for land use, utility,

and schools planning. The work is guided by a multi-jurisdictional steering committee representing transportation agencies throughout the region, NCDOT, and the Federal Highway Administration.

■ **Healthy Communities** – In collaboration with the Mecklenburg County Health Department and Cabarrus Health Alliance, Centralina hosted the third annual Planning for Healthy Communities conference, bringing together planners, park and recreation officials, and public health officials from throughout the region to build local capacity for creating healthy, life-long communities. Local governments received training on how to incorporate health into their plans and policies, how to combine health and transportation data sources and funding, how to increase local food access, and the economic benefits of healthy environments.

■ **Community Based Housing Strategies** – Using the regional housing assessment completed through CONNECT Our Future as a starting point, CCOG worked with the Town of Mooresville on a local housing strategy to develop detailed, localized housing strategies to encourage the right kind – quantity, type, price point, and location – of housing to meet the needs of current and future residents and employers.

■ **Regional Mobility Management** – The Regional Mobility Management project represents a collaborative effort of the region’s rural transportation advisory boards and the urban transit systems to implement measures outlined in the Regional Mobility Management Plan. This effort is aimed at improving coordination and gaining efficiencies in the mobility network for the benefit of all residents, with particular interest in seniors, veterans, and those with disabilities.

■ **Regional Solid Waste & Recycling** - Public Solid Waste & Recycling professionals from the nine-county region meet quarterly to receive updates on legislative activities and to discuss shared challenges, experiences, and successes. These meetings have helped build strong relationships and opportunities for collaboration and sharing.

■ **Clean Transportation** – CCOG houses the Greater Charlotte Region’s U.S. Department of Energy’s Clean Cities program, the Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition (CCFC). The CCFC’s mission is to reduce petroleum in the transportation sector by assisting local public and private fleets to implement alternative fuels, idle-reduction measures, fuel economy improvements, and emerging transportation technologies. Through technical assistance, education, outreach, and grant assistance, CCFC has helped to reduce more than 12.6 million gallons of gasoline equivalent, and over 71,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions. Current projects include:

Clean Fuel Advanced Technology (CFAT)

Program: CCFC is the primary partner supporting the Greater Charlotte Region for this NC Clean Energy Technology Center-led initiative. The work is focused on air quality education and support of air quality improvements through funding for clean fuels and advanced technology vehicle and infrastructure projects.

Southeast Alternative Fuel Vehicle Demonstration Initiative (SADI):

The goal of this program is to reduce fuel and emissions by supporting the increased use of alternative fuel vehicles and advanced technology vehicles. Interested fleets and individuals will have the opportunity to test demo select vehicles in order to assess the applicability of these types of vehicles for their organization.

Water Resources Planning – The focus of Centralina CCOG’s Water Resource Planning initiative is to ensure that the future water supply can meet the nine-county region’s needs to sustain economic, environmental, and social well-being. The project goal is to develop long-term water strategies guided by a cross-basin collaborative network and to build elected official and local government awareness and capacity around water issues.

Centralina Health Solutions Center

Centralina is pleased to announce the creation of a new research, training, and service center combining the efforts of the Planning and Aging Services departments to assist local governments, not-for-profits, and private enterprises in initiatives to improve the health of their communities and offer



a high quality of life, at all stages of life. Services include evidence-based training programs to strengthen

independent living and self-management skills, health in all policies assessments, bike, pedestrian, and greenway planning, street diet visualizations, etc.

The center has been selected as one of 15 coalitions within the nation to be part of the American Planning Association’s Plan4Health program (www.plan4health.us/). This year-long project will analyze and recommend ways to increase physical activity opportunities within select neighborhoods with low socioeconomic and health conditions. Project goals include promoting health equity, decreasing health disparities, and developing a replicable model for analyzing and improving health conditions within disadvantaged neighborhoods and communities. As part of this project, staff and partners will present trainings for Centralina members on topics such as conducting biking and walking audits, shared use agreements, and increasing accessibility to parks for all ages and abilities.

The Centralina Health Solutions Center is yet another exemplary way in which Centralina is a national leader among councils of government in providing innovative services to our members.

CCOG IN 10 WORDS

“Regional organization supporting cooperation and coordination for a better tomorrow.”

– Martha Sue Hall, City of Albemarle Councilperson



“National leader in helping local communities reach their highest potential.”

– Michelle E. Nance, Planning Director Centralina Council of Governments



CCOG IN 10 WORDS

“Provides services that governmental units would have difficulty accomplishing alone.”

– Joe Carpenter,
Gaston County
Commissioner



“A resource for the region providing consultative services for projects.”

– Jarvis Woodburn,
Anson County
Commissioner

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Through public and private sector partnerships, the Centralina Workforce Development Board (WDB) provides leadership in a variety of workforce development areas and has been effective in meeting the needs of the current and emerging workforce. This year's program highlights include:

■ **NCWorks Career Centers** – The Centralina WDB, which is responsible for the oversight and operation of local NCWorks Career Centers, has developed a vision and implemented a plan of action for upgrading Career Center facilities and changing the service environment. The NCWorks Career Center in Mooresville which opened in April 2015 is an example of this “new day for workforce services.” The eight NCWorks Career Centers in the region collectively served 45,298 career seekers looking for the right talent match for their skills and provided 70,095 services to employers and businesses in the region during the past fiscal year. For more information on the NCWorks Career Centers, visit www.centralinaworks.com

■ **Incumbent Worker Grants** – The NCWorks Incumbent Worker Training Grants offered by the Centralina WDB are competitive training grants designed to address employees' skill gaps and thereby help local companies grow. Eligible employers can use this talent solution when their employees have identified skills gaps that need to be addressed through training. These training funds can be used to provide either occupational or educational training to help employees who have identified skills gaps. The training can help employees who want to upgrade skills and knowledge to retain their current job or obtain industry recognized certifications, or gain new skills and knowledge to advance their career with their employer. During the past fiscal year, the Centralina WDB was able to provide Incumbent Worker funding in the amount of \$201,439 to a total of 21 area businesses to train and upgrade the skills of 541 employees. For more information on Incumbent Worker grants, visit www.centralinaworks.com.

■ **NC Manufacturing Institute** – Centralina WDB in partnership with Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, NCWorks Career Centers, Cabarrus Regional Economic Development, Cabarrus Regional Chamber of Commerce, RowanWorks, Rowan County Chamber of Commerce, and employers developed and implemented the NC

Manufacturing Institute (NCMI). The North Carolina Manufacturing Institute is a collaboration between private and public sector partners and investors to link and leverage assets and resources in order to close the manufacturing skills gap through workforce training and certification, improve the image of manufacturing employment opportunities among job seekers, and assist manufacturing firms in improving recruitment, selection and retention of talent. Working together, the NCMI partners have established an effective pipeline through which our local employers now have convenient and quick access to qualified candidates. These efforts produced the following results:

- One hundred eighty Discovery Session attendees in seven months directly exposed to the importance of manufacturing and the availability of good, well-paying jobs in that sector.
- Three eight-week training classes held starting in June, August and September with 27 Certified Production Technicians graduating from the eight-week training program.
- Twelve field trips to local employers and training labs.
- Three Interview Fairs held for the NCMI partners to meet the graduates, with an 86 percent employer participation rate.
- Twenty graduates hired, 13 by NCMI partners, within one month of graduation due largely to the Partner Interview Fairs.
- Seven highly-qualified and nationally-certified graduates still available for interviewing.

For more information, please visit www.ncmanufacturinginstitute.com.

The Centralina Workforce Development Board, with regional partners and employers developed the NC Manufacturing Institute, establishing an effective talent pipeline for local employers to qualified job-seekers.

AGING

Through individual and systemic advocacy, innovative program development and creating educational opportunities, the Centralina Area Agency on Aging (CAAA) supports providers and empowers individuals and those who care for them by providing the ability to age with choice. This year's program highlights include:

■ **Centralina Area Agency on Aging "New Look."** This year the AAA rolled out a new look, updating its mission, vision, logo, brochures, and outreach materials. Centralina AAA also began work on a new website which will be completed in early 2016.



■ **Annual Aging Conference** – Hundreds of professionals in the field of aging, healthcare, long term care, social services, home health, direct services attend the Annual Aging Conference and more come together each year to expand their knowledge of issues related to aging and disabilities. The Annual Aging Conference is the largest conference on aging anywhere in the state in featured 40 exhibitors and sponsors as well as nationally recognized speakers.

■ **Volunteer Transportation Services (VTS)** – The Volunteer Transportation Services program was developed to provide transportation to older adults, people with disabilities and veterans in the Centralina Region through a network of certified volunteers. The program reflects a grassroots effort to fill transportation gaps for those who do not qualify for existing services and relies on the help of volunteers from faith-based community groups, civic clubs and organizations, private companies, and government agencies to ensure the success of the program.

■ **Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)** – Providing on-the-job training opportunities for low-income, unemployed seniors over age 55, SCSEP participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at non-profit sites. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities. Enrollment priority is given to veterans/qualified spouses and individuals age 65 and older. In 2015, more than 25 percent of SCSEP participants gained permanent, unsubsidized employment.

In 2015, more than 25 percent of Senior Community Services Employment Program participants gained permanent, unsubsidized employment

■ **Local Contact Agency (LCA)** – A Medicaid Waiver from the Division of Medical Assistance funds the Local Contact Agency. Using a certified Options Counselor, the Area Agency on Aging assists residents in nursing facilities who are interested in possibly returning to the community explore the possible options including long-term services and supports. The LCA assists the individual in exploring the viability of leaving the institutional setting and developing a plan that will lead them toward a more independent life.

■ **Evidence-based Health Programs (EBHP)** – The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) offers community-focused evidence-based health programs to promote healthy lifestyles and chronic disease self-management. These programs are focused on increasing physical activity, improving diet and nutrition, reducing falls, and promoting self-management. More than 100 workshops were provided in Centralina's nine-county region, helping approximately 1,300 individuals improve their quality of life and remain active in their communities. All of

this is done successfully through a strong network of volunteers and partners in our region.

The AAA continues to expand by implementing additional evidence-based health programs that will meet the needs of the aging population. Centralina also participated in a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services research grant in which the AAA distributed surveys to all clients who participated in EBHP. The research is looking at

effectiveness of the EBHP for possible future Medicare reimbursement.

■ **Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman** – The Ombudsman program works to resolve complaints by or on behalf of residents in long term care facilities. Ombudsman provide education on long term care and residents' rights issues to residents, facility staff, family members and the general public. This past year the Ombudsman provided multiple workshops on such issues as transfer/discharge, ADA issues, dementia, and elder abuse awareness.

CCOG IN 10 WORDS

"In searching for limited funding, CCOG is a fruitful resource."

– Hazen Blodgett, Town of Matthews Manager



"Regional partnering organization providing cutting edge solutions to community issues."

– Linda Miller, Aging Programs Director, Centralina Council of Governments

CCOG IN 10 WORDS

“Provides municipalities and counties with support, coordination and consultative services.”

– Bill Deter,
Town of
Weddington
Mayor



“A resource for small towns working to resolve big issues.”

– Ann Bailie,
Town of Troutman
Manager

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Essential to collaborative region-wide economic growth is the Centralina Economic Development Commission (CEDC), established by Centralina in 2005 as a 501(c)3 public-private entity and local U.S. Commerce EDA Designated Economic Development District. The CEDC builds collaborative partnerships to promote regional economic vitality through growth of target industry clusters, expanding jobs creation activities, and providing competitive advantage strategies to compete nationally and globally. Significant accomplishments for the Commission include:

■ **Centralina Regional Economic Development District's CEDS Plan** – The implementation of the 2012-2017 Centralina Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), “Prosperity for Greater Charlotte Report” and groundbreaking Jobs, Workforce, and Education Alignment Strategy continued with priorities that promoted alignment of regional infrastructure, talent and assets for economic growth. Recognized with a 2014 NADO Innovation Award as partner for “Centralina Career Headlight”, that project operationalized key CEDS plan strategies for boosting the job growth rate by linking the region’s workforce skills and strengths, education, and training assets to the needs of high-growth and emerging industries.

Global Competitiveness Summit Series Support To Global Vision Leaders Taskforce – “Prosperity for Greater Charlotte” and CEDC initiatives supported the 5th Charlotte Global Competitiveness Summit in March 2015 that continues to build a “Hub of Global Commerce” strategic brand by business, education and community leaders engaging Greater Charlotte Region’s role in the global marketplace. The 5th Annual Advanced Manufacturing Awards program was held in February 2015 with U.S. Commerce EDA Assistant Secretary, Honorable Jay Williams, as keynote with additional Exports Roundtable meeting with the Assistant Secretary and regional leaders including the District Export Council.

■ **Centralina Manufacturing Ecosystem Development Strategy (CMEDS)** - Centralina and the CEDC completed final phases of the Investing in Manufacturing Community Partnership (IMCP) Phase I Strategy Planning grant from U.S. Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). The finished CMEDS plan will support and extend the Greater Charlotte Region’s primary core competitive competency in Advanced Manufacturing by supporting the Advanced Industries workforce pipeline, R&D, supply chain analysis, and export logistics growth for the region.

CCOG’s Community and Economic Department (CED) provides municipal management and grant administration services and served as a regional conduit for other federal and state grants, including public facilities, water and wastewater improvements, and housing to help promote local and regional economic growth and quality of life. Significant activities in Fiscal Year 2013-14 include:

■ **HUD Five-Year Consolidated Plan Implementation** – The department provided grant administration services for the activities and projects within the five-year consolidated plan for Mecklenburg County encompassing approximately \$600,000 annually in HUD Community Development Block Grant funding. It focuses on low and moderate income population housing and community development needs.

■ **Code Enforcement and Drug-Alcohol Testing Program (DATP)** – Multiple jurisdictions engaged the CED to provide code enforcement and minimum housing standards operations as well as DATP testing for city and county workforce regulatory requirements.

■ **Grants** – CCOG and the CEDC received an invitation-only Lumina Foundation Community Postsecondary Attainment grant for the Greater Charlotte Region in May 2015. Approximately 75 major metropolitan

locations from across the country have been invited to participate in this program. The goal of the Lumina Foundation is to increase the proportion of Americans with postsecondary degrees to 60 percent by the year 2025. Our project, Centralina Partnership for Attainment and Career Pathways (CPACP) is providing a pilot project and system for internal existing industry workforce attainment and related college and K-12 pipeline alignment.

CCOG and the CEDC received an invitation-only Lumina Foundation Community Postsecondary Attainment grant for the Greater Charlotte Region in May 2015, and created Centralina Partnership for Attainment and Career Pathways project.

Centralina's Successful First Conference Focused on Local Government Tools & Resources

Centralina Council of Government's inaugural "Creative Solutions for Thriving Communities" annual conference Dec. 11, 2014, in Concord, N.C., was attended by more than 200 local government elected officials and staff, and private sector officials from the Greater Charlotte Region.

Centralina Executive Director Jim Prosser said the content of the conference represents the new direction being taken Centralina Council of Governments in response to the interests expressed by member communities.

The conference was focused on practical tools, best practices, resources and private-public partnerships designed to meet the needs specific to communities and counties in the Greater Charlotte Region. The conference was built to address what communities and their residents identified as challenges during the past 2 1/2 years of the CONNECT Our Future process.

"We designed this conference to provide the tools and resources to support strengthening each and every community within our region. It's a simple equation. Stronger communities will build a stronger region." said Prosser.

Local government officials who attended said the conference helped equip them for the issues their jurisdictions face.

Conference breakout session topics included:

- Community housing strategies
- Streamlining review and permitting processes
- Regional transit
- Creating lifelong communities
- Developing creative innovative places
- Aligning workforce & industry needs
- Long-term financial strategies
- Energy management
- Building healthy communities
- Public engagement process
- Creating innovative places
- Local government CONNECT tools



"With their first-ever, regional, one-day conference, 'Creative Solutions for Thriving Communities,' the Centralina Council of Governments found a way to bring our regional elected and appointed officials together for what was probably the most concise and effectively-focused forum on community building that I have had the pleasure of participating in. With its focus on innovation and creativity, it was equally as instructive to newcomers to local government as it was eye-opening to those of us who have been in the profession for many years."

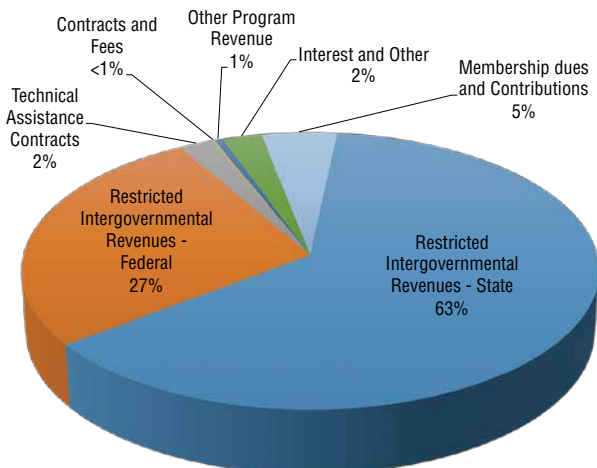
– **James M. Palenick,**
Interim Manager, Town of Dallas

"We are in the midst of rapid growth. This type of change is disruptive, but it also demands us to think and act differently. Overall the conference provided the opportunity to see what we will need to embrace and plan for if we wish to enable successful growth. On a practical level the panel approach provided first hand experiences from peer municipalities already tackling these emerging issues that we can apply quickly."

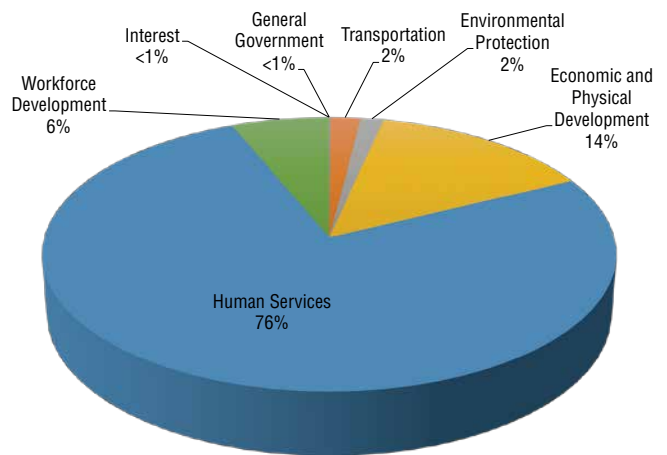
– **Stephen Maher,**
Mayor, Town of Waxhaw

Financial Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2015

Centralina Council of Governments' revenues from all sources were \$15,961,534 during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015, with increases in federal grants revenue. The accompanying charts show the primary revenues by source and expenditures by program.



Sources of Revenues



Expenditures by Program



Centralina Council of Governments

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