



A Message from Our Executive Director

It goes without saying that the last month has brought us unprecedented changes to how we live, work, learn and socialize. I'm proud of how our team is navigating these changes with good spirits, flexibility and dedication to delivering our mission for the region. I also appreciate the leadership and dedication of our fellow public servants and elected officials during this protracted crisis. We are actively seeking out ways to support our membership during these tumultuous times; from augmenting our [federal advocacy agenda](#), to actively engaging managers, to partnering with state agencies and institutions, we seek to be agile and responsive to your needs. While you are all taking care of your communities, constituents and businesses, we will focus on bringing us together through regional cooperation since we know the road to recovery will require a collaborative stance.

As you know, our work is not just about regionalism and local government support, we also deeply committed to the people of our region and recognize the personal impacts of this crisis. Our **Centralina Area Agency on Aging** team and their provider network are really on the front lines; as you'll see from the articles below, they continue to deliver person-centered services and are working with state and federal partners to ensure our seniors have the resources they need. Our **Centralina Workforce Development Board** team is also working to virtually connect job seekers with area businesses that are hiring; and our **Centralina Community Economic Development** team is wading through new federal funding resources and collaborating with local partners on implementation strategies. By the time you read this newsletter, our situation may have shifted again, so I encourage you to embrace the fluidity, find value in collaboration and reach out to us. Stay healthy!

Capitol Corner: Working For You From DC to Raleigh

In early March, what now seems like an eternity ago, two of the primary national organizations for local governments – the **National Association of Counties** and **National League of Cities**-- held their annual legislative conferences in Washington, DC. Before COVID-19 took over the world and dominated our conversations, there were some key takeaways that are still worth sharing. For example, it was confirmed at that time during a panel discussion that most experts believe the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act** will not get reauthorized this year. Primary reason given is because the **Higher Education Act (HEA)** also needs to be reauthorized. The HEA was last reauthorized in 2008 and is supposed to be renewed every five years. It has been continued through a series of temporary extensions instead. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Chairman Lamar Alexander, a former U.S. Secretary of Education under President George H.W. Bush, considers the HEA a bigger priority and part of his legacy. North Carolina's U.S. Senator Richard Burr is also very highly ranked on the HELP Committee. Finally, it was clear that federal assistance for affordable housing, infrastructure and the opioid epidemic are still top priorities for local governments.

Grants List Change: Beginning FY2021, we will no longer publish Strategics' annual grant forecast or monthly grant opportunities list in our newsletter. If you are a [member community](#) and would like to continue receiving this information, please email Kelly Weston at kweston@centralina.org to be added to her grants distribution list.

Annual Grants Forecast

April Grants Alert

CORONAVIRUS SPOTLIGHT:
Resources, Community Stories and Leadership Tips

Congress is currently in recess until April 20th but has already begun discussions behind the scenes on a Phase 4 package. Centralina has weighed in with its congressional delegation, as well as House and Senate leadership, on additional funding and flexibility needed to support the Centralina Area Agency on Aging. Additional communications from Centralina to Congress will also occur regarding areas where local governments have not received the level of support needed to weather the pandemic.

Our federal consultant and lobbyist, Leslie Mazingo of Strategics Consulting, will continue to keep a close eye on all the moving parts related to the federal response to the coronavirus crises. To date, she has written two detailed memos for our members, including an overview of the **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)** and will provide additional memos as new legislation is passed. Leslie and other members of the Centralina team are also available to answer questions. Please call 704-372-2416 if there ways we can help and please review the list of resources below.

**Strategics: Federal
Funding for COVID-19
Response**

**Strategics: CARES Act
Overview**

**National Association of
Counties: CARES Act
Analysis**

**U.S. Chamber of Commerce:
Coronavirus Emergency Loans - Small
Business Guide and Checklist**

**NC Emergency Management: FEMA
Public Assistance Program Summary
for COVID-19**

COVID-19 Resource Library

We know that there is so much information being produced and disseminated related to COVID-19 response and recovery that it is overwhelming to keep track of. We're taking some of the burden of keeping track of what comes into your inbox by standing up the **Regional Managers COVID-19 Resource Library and Microsoft SharePoint Microsite**. In the resource library we loaded key documents from state and federal agencies, sample policies and best practices to help local governments. We're also linking to leadership resources, crisis communication and other management tools that are curated for good practice. To access the library, [click on this link](#) or request an invitation to view the full capabilities of the microsite, which requires an account, by emailing Kelly Weston at kweston@centralina.org.

Public Virtual Meetings: A Guide for Planning Boards

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, local governments in are canceling, postponing, modifying and avoiding gatherings of people. This creates issues for local governments that are required by North Carolina statute to conduct public hearings and meetings to remain in compliance with state law and local ordinances. Centralina created a resource for local governments as they explore the world of virtual meetings. To read the whitepaper that includes guidance on technology resources, practical tips and lessons learned, [click here](#).

Celebrating National Volunteer Month: Centralina Volunteer Efforts Shine Through COVID-19

April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month, and the Centralina Area Agency on Aging staff wish to thank all our Community Advisory Committee members and all others who dedicate their time and talents to help enhance the quality of life senior adults in our region.

Recently, Shirley Wiggins, worked with fellow volunteers Pat Rivers and Gladys Britt to address unmet needs in local long-term care facilities during the COVID-19 crisis. Together they donated money for the purchase of 500 masks for our staff working in adult care homes in Gaston County. The facilities were extremely grateful and appreciative to receive the masks. "We have been hunting masks all over the state and have been unable to get any." [Continue](#)

Managers' Corner: Leading Through Crisis

Take a short break and read up on leadership insights from the **Bloomberg Coronavirus Local Response Initiative** in partnership with the **Harvard Kennedy School of Government**. The post includes key insights and links to the full slide deck if you want to dive deeper. The keys are to: assess where you are in the life cycle of the crisis; establish a problem-solving process for a novel threat; and understand the political aspects and identify risks. [Dive deeper](#)

Delivering Food to Seniors During COVID-19

Centralina Area Agency on Aging provider, **Meals on Wheels**, is continuing to deliver food to older adults during the COVID-19 crisis. The demand for home deliveries is up, but thanks to volunteers, they are able to reach those in need.

WFAE: [Gaston Meals On Wheels Adapts To Meet Needs For Food And Connection](#)

WBTV: [Call to Action: Volunteers needed for Meals on Wheels in Gaston County](#)

Gaston Gazette: [Church steps up to help Meals on Wheels program](#)

Five Things Coronavirus Could Change in Charlotte

Closed bars, restaurants and breweries. Hundreds of thousands of employees working from home while trying to home-school children. Near-empty road and no toilet paper on the shelves. The immediate impacts from the coronavirus crisis are highly visible. But the virus could have more long-lasting and farther-reaching impacts beyond the immediate unemployment and economic disruption we're seeing. Here are five other areas the coronavirus could have an impact on our region...[continue](#).

CONNECT Beyond: A Regional Mobility Initiative

A lot has changed since we kicked off our regional mobility initiative CONNECT Beyond on February 24, 2020. Like many of you, we have had to shift gears to respond to changes mandated by the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring the residents of our region still have access to services. We thank each of you and your amazing teams for your diligent responses to the community's needs.

These changes have also meant we are all taking a hard look at the programs we advance and how we plan for the future. For us, one thing is abundantly clear, **regional mobility for our residents must remain a priority**. Mobility is being able to get needed resources for your family, accessing healthcare services and getting to your place of work as an essential employee. Our communities can't stop moving if we are going to see this trying time to the other side.

We owe it to our region to keep sight of our goal of finding new solutions that promote equitable economic development while helping our neighbors and visitors easily get where they want and need to go. For this reason we are advancing CONNECT Beyond and will begin scheduling virtual meetings of our Policy and Technical Advisory Committees in May. Soon to follow will be a public engagement effort that respects the current concerns of our community members, but also encourages them to think ahead to what they wish to see for their future mobility.

Census Response Tracking

Census 2020 is underway and it is vital that we have a complete count in our region and across the state. Take the opportunity to share some positive news with your community about the importance of responding to the Census 2020 invitation to reply online. You can track your county's response rate [online here](#).

Livable Communities Grant

The AARP Community Challenge program celebrates the creativity and dedication of local leaders by awarding small grants for "quick-action" projects that improve local housing, transportation, public spaces, technology, civic engagement and more. Applications are due May 15. [Details here](#)

Nominations Open for Region of Excellence Awards

The Region of Excellence Awards are an opportunity to recognize and celebrate how local governments and partners expand opportunity and improve quality of life across our region. Nominate a project, program or plan that made a significant and positive community contribution in 2019. Visit our site for [awards criteria and application forms](#). Here are the categories:

1. Cross-Community Collaboration
2. Local Government Innovation
3. Improving Quality of Life
4. Clean Cities
5. Aging in Action
6. James D. Prosser Excellence in Government Leadership

All [Upcoming Events](#) have been postponed or are being held virtually. Stay safe.



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