



# CENTRALINA

REGIONAL COUNCIL

## THE CENTRAL LINES

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| March 13 | <a href="#">Centralina Executive Board Meeting</a>  |
| March 14 | <a href="#">Small Towns Thrive: Peer to Peer - Communications</a>   |
| March 20 | <a href="#">Regional Managers Meeting</a>   |
| March 27 | Regional Economic Briefing: <a href="#">What You Need to Know About the Economy Before Finalizing Your Budget</a> |
| April 25 | Centralina Learns: <a href="#">Aging Sensitivity &amp; Building Age-Friendly Communities</a>                      |

## CAPITOL CORNER

### **Centralina Visits Washington DC for NARC + Federal Advocacy**

In mid-February, Executive Director Geraldine Gardner traveled to Washington, DC to participate in the annual National Conference of Regions hosted by the National



Association of Regional Councils (NARC). While in DC, she participated in numerous advocacy meetings, with Centralina's federal government relations expert, Leslie Mazingo, to discuss Centralina's federal priorities as listed on the approved Federal Action Plan. Together Geraldine and Leslie kicked off their itinerary with a joint meeting with staff from both **U.S. Senator Thom Tillis's** office and **U.S. Senator Ted Budd's** office. During the discussion they emphasized the pending Brownfields Coalition Assessment grant application and regional mobility.

After their meeting with the Senators, they met with **U.S. Representative Alma Adams's** staff. They expressed thanks for Congresswoman Adams's support and assistance with the North Mecklenburg County Housing Preservation Initiative. Additionally, they met with DC staff for **U.S. Representative Jeff Jackson** to reiterate Centralina's request for the Congressman's support for the Brownfields grant. Within 24 hours after the meeting, Congressman Jackson sent a letter of support to the Environmental Protection Agency.



*Jeff Jackson's Office*



*Thom Tillis' & Ted Budd's Office*



*Alma Adams' Office*

[Learn More About the Advocacy Visit](#)

## Centralina Overview Video



We debuted a short, two-minute video at the last board of delegates meeting in February that gives viewers a high-level look at our mission and our work. Want to learn more about what we do, who we serve and why we do it? [Check out this video.](#)

## FEATURED ARTICLES

[Meet the New Centralina Board Officers](#)



Last month we held our annual board of delegate meeting where members elected new officers, caucused to select municipal representatives to the executive board and officially welcomed a new member, the Town of China Grove, bringing our membership total to 64.

*First row officers (from left): Anson County Commissioner Javis Woodburn (Secretary), McAdenville Council Member Jay McCosh (Chair), Stallings Mayor Pro Tem David Scholl (Vice Chair), Mecklenburg County Commissioner Tony Long (Secretary)*

## Our Region's Steps Towards Sustainability

On March 1, Centralina submitted our region's first **Priority Climate Action Plan** to support investment in policies, practices and technologies that reduce pollutant emissions, create high-quality jobs, spur economic growth and enhance the quality of life for our communities. The plan was developed with input from local and regional entities within our region, including a survey and focus groups. As a result of these engagement activities, stakeholders identified more than 100 examples of implementation-ready project ideas that were then categorized into seven priority measures for the purposes of pursuing funding through implementation grants.

[Read the Plan & Lean More About Priority Measures](#)

## EVENT: What You Need to Know About the Economy Before Finalizing Your Budget



As local governments across the region head into budgeting season, what are the macroeconomic conditions and trends that may influence your local decisions? Join us on March 27th from noon - 1 p.m. for an engaging virtual presentation from Mark Vitner, Chief Economist at Piedmont Crescent Capital, to unpack what's happening in the economy.

Mark will cover a range national and state economic issues, with the bulk of the presentation focusing on the economic outlook for the greater Charlotte

region. There will also be time in the session for questions.

[Register Here](#)

## Child Care and the North Carolina Economy: Strategic Recommendations for Local Government

Child care is one of the biggest expenses families face, spending nearly \$11,467 on infant care yearly in North Carolina. To put this into perspective, the annual cost of infant care is 56% greater than the annual cost to attend a four-year public NC university. These obstacles create limitations on our workforce and in turn, negatively impact the economy. Impediments to quality and affordable child care will only be exacerbated once temporary relief from the U.S American Rescue Plan funds are depleted in June 2024.

Recognizing this challenge confronting many families in our region, the Centralina Economic Development District decided to host a moderated discussion between economic developers, child care providers and local government employees and officials to develop actionable solutions and uncover best practices. The result was a "call to action" document titled **Child Care: Nurturing Growth (Strategic Recommendations for Economic Development and Local Government)**. The solutions and best practices discussed amongst the group were also incorporated into a tool kit.

[Learn More & Get the Resources](#)

## Centralina AAA's Housing & Home Improvement Program Helps Older Adults Stay Safe

Building Safer Homes for Older Adults One Ramp at a Time

Did you know that more than 12% of adults in the United States have a mobility disability including serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs? And, closer to home, based on the 2022 state aging profile, 21% of North Carolinians who are 65 and over live with a disability that affects their ability to ambulate.



Mobility limitations create a variety of challenges, including getting out of bed, walking to the kitchen, rising from a favorite chair and navigating stairs to enter or exit their home. Home modifications like accessible ramps can increase an individual's independence, security and safety.

Federal funds and programs for older and disabled adults historically responded to the most basic needs, such as nutrition, in-home aide and transportation. Home improvement services were rarely prioritized, and often received too little funding to be





impactful. In response to this chronically unmet need, Centralina Area Agency on Aging (AAA) used ARPA funding to develop the Housing & Home Improvement program, which provides a variety of home modifications to older adults, including wheelchair-accessible ramps.

[Read the Full Success Story](#)

## Centralina WDB Recognized with Fusion Award for Iredell Ready Initiative



Centralina Workforce Development Board (WDB), Iredell Economic Development Corporation and partners received the Fusion Award at the Greater Statesville Chamber of Commerce's SAGE Awards for their work on **Iredell Ready**. Iredell Ready is a county-wide workforce initiative focused on cultivating career exploration, promoting lifelong learning, and closing the skills gap. The initiative's dashboard serves as a "one-stop shop" resource to help

students and residents identify opportunities to pursue career pathways and employment with businesses in Iredell County. Iredell Ready also strengthens partnerships with businesses by supporting their recruitment, retention and pipeline development efforts to build a skilled workforce.

David Hollars, Director of Centralina WDB, remarked, "Centralina Workforce Development Board (WDB) is proud to be a founding partner in Iredell Ready, a great, locally driven initiative helping to create pathways for Iredell County residents now and for the future. Centralina WDB and our NCWorks Career Centers remain committed to the Iredell Ready goal of building the talent pipeline, aligning curriculums and skilling and reskilling the workforce in Iredell County."

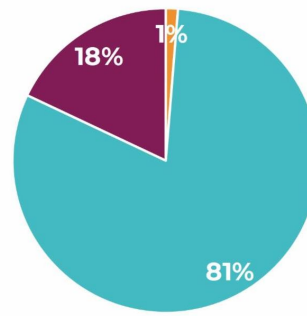
[Learn More](#)

## Mid-Year Progress Report

The Centralina team has been working diligently on the implementation of the FY2024 workplan, which includes 78 tactics that support implementation of our strategic plan. Halfway through the fiscal year, we have either started or completed 82% of our planned

activities for the year. Learn more about our efforts toward regional engagement, local government support and individual service delivery in our quarterly report.

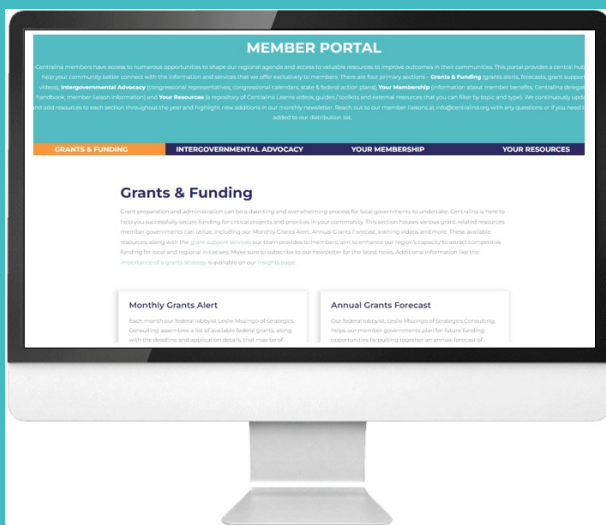
### Workplan Implementation Status



■ Completed ■ In Progress ■ Not Started

[View the Report & See Project Highlights](#)

## Are You Taking Advantage of Your Membership?



### GRANTS ASSISTANCE

There are many new resources on the member portal, including the updated annual grants forecast broken down by quarter with links to the NOFO (notice of funding opportunity). This forecast is intended as a planning tool so you can see what grants are anticipated and when. This will help you prepare for upcoming application processes since requirements often do not change year to year. We also have the monthly grants

alerts with the most recent edition featuring popular firefighters grants, webinars and more.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the Resource Library section of the portal, check out these new videos and guides:

- Implementing Strategic Plans
- Artificial Intelligence Usage Policies
- Stormwater Pre-Development Approaches

[View the Member Resources](#)

## IN THE NEWS

### NCPRO Pandemic Recovery Focus Group Series

The North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office (NCPRO) is looking to engage local stakeholders in our region through virtual focus groups in to identify issues of highest concern about the ongoing recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Focus groups will consider the concerns raised by various surveys and indexes through their discussions in order to assess the success of

state, local and federal programs to address these concerns. Group feedback will help formulate recommendations for continuing to build resilient communities across the state beyond the timeframe for federal programs. [Visit this link to learn more and sign-up.](#)

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## Golden LEAF's CBGI Application Period Open

The Community-Based Grants Initiative (CBGI), offered through the Golden LEAF Foundation, is a grant program that provides funding toward eligible projects focused on investing in economic growth in the community. Counties in the Centralina region can apply for the program in the Southwest Prosperity Zone. Funding is prioritized for projects focused on job creation, economic investment, agriculture and workforce preparedness. [Learn more about the initiative and how to apply.](#)

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[View Centralina Job Opportunities](#)

[Access the Member Portal](#)



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