

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Western Piedmont Council of Governments. Don't forget to add [jason.toney@wpcog.org](mailto:jason.toney@wpcog.org) to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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# WPCOG - Newsletter

December 2019

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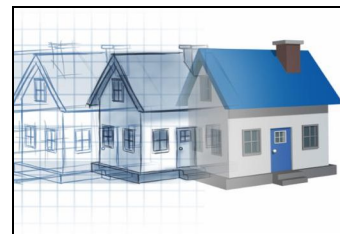
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## Area Agency on Aging National Caregiver Month 2019

### What is Project C.A.R.E.?

Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty) is a North Carolina funded dementia-specific support program for family caregivers. The program uses a family consultant to provide comprehensive support to caregivers of those caring for someone at home with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. Project C.A.R.E. family consultants assist caregivers with education, resources and access to vouchers to alleviate some of the stress caregiving can create. The purpose of the program is to assist the caregiver with keeping the person with Dementia safe and comfortable in their home for as long as it is possible. The Family Consultant receives referrals to the program and schedules in-home visits to meet with the caregiver and the person with dementia. The family consultant receives referrals to the program and speaks with the caregiver to determine the best method of performing an assessment. The level of assistance provided varies and is dependent upon what the caregiver needs and prefers. In the last year, Project CARE has provided support to more than 150 caregivers in the 16 county region. Many of the caregivers served have elected to utilize respite to provide a needed break from the 24 hour a day responsibility of caregiving. Caregivers of any age are who is caring for someone with Alzheimer's Disease or a related dementia who are not receiving services through similar programs are eligible for Project C.A.R.E. Services are available for those on the waiting list for other programs. While there are no specific income limitations, Project C.A.R.E. gives priority to low-income, rural and minority families.



**Project C.A.R.E. Also provides education and information to the public and is involved in the Dementia Friendly Initiative.** Current statistics reveal that every 65 seconds someone is diagnosed with Dementia. One in 3 Seniors die with a Dementia Diagnosis. As Time Progresses, we are all going to know, care for or be a person with Dementia. It is important for everyone to know the signs of Dementia and how to help.

**Below is a listing of signs as compared to normal aging:**

- Memory Loss that Affects Daily Life: Forgetfulness is common with Dementia, but can also be common as we age. The difference is ability to think through the steps and recall accurate information. People with Dementia cannot sequence and remember if something has been forgotten
- Challenges in planning or solving problems. Inability to follow instructions like recipes or mathematical tasks are common with Dementia. People without Dementia may occasionally make an error in the checkbook, but can find and correct their errors.
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks. People with Dementia may forget the steps involved in a task such as cleaning, dressing and brushing teeth. People without Dementia may forget how to program electronics, but can complete the task with help.
- Confusion with time or place. A person with Dementia can lose track of days, seasons and passage of time. They may think it is time to get up and eat breakfast after an afternoon nap. People without

Dementia May forget an appointment or the day of the week upon waking, but can remember once they are up and functioning.

- Trouble understanding spatial relationships and images. People with Dementia may have trouble reading, judging distance or may pass a mirror and think someone else is in the room. Typically, people without dementia can discern special and visual changes upon consultation with an optometrist or their physician.
- Problems with words in speaking or writing. A person with dementia may forget the word for a common item, for example a straw and cannot seem to recall the word. Sometimes they have trouble writing a word that is familiar and used daily. A stool may become a footrest. Typically, people without Dementia may have to think longer to find the right word to use in a sentence, or will substitute a different word of the similar meaning.
- Misplacing things and inability to retrace steps. Often people with Dementia will place objects in unusual places: remote control in the microwave or keys in the freezer. Once they have placed it in an unfamiliar location, they cannot find it and will often accuse others of taking their things. Typically, a person without dementia will put something in an unfamiliar location (keys in the freezer), but can retrace their steps to find where they put them.
- Decreased or poor judgments. People with Dementia may have difficulty making decisions. Anything from deciding a meal to prepare and items to use to how to manage money can be a concern. They also begin to pay less attention to grooming and dressing. Typically, people without Dementia occasionally make bad decisions, but usually those are small in scale and easily correctable.
- Withdrawal from work or Social Activities. A person with Dementia may remove themselves from things they once enjoyed because they notice a difference in their ability, because they can no longer interact normally, or they may have trouble keeping up with others. A typical person without Dementia may sometimes be weary of attending events or tire of routine of social obligations.
- Changes in mood and personality. The mood and personality of a person with Dementia can change slightly or dramatically. They can become anxious, confused, depressed or fearful. A change in situation or routine may be out of their comfort zone and cause extreme upset. While typically, people without Dementia may develop habits and become upset with something out of routine happens, a person with Dementia can recover quickly.

*(Information excerpt from the Alzheimer's Association 10 Warning Signs)*

**Project C.A.R.E. is here to help anyone with Dementia. Please call if we can be of assistance as you work to assist those with Dementia. Remember. We will all encounter someone with Dementia in our lifetime.**

**Service Area:**

Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Davie, Forsyth, Mitchell, Stokes, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin and Yancey Counties.

**Project C.A.R.E. services are provided at no cost.  
Learn more at [www.wpcogaaa.org](http://www.wpcogaaa.org) or Call 828-485-4267**

**You are not alone . . . call for help!**

Article by Karen Phoenix

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## **Community & Economic Development**

### **City of Conover Awarded \$750K Neighborhood Revitalization Grant**

The City of Conover has been awarded a \$750,000 Neighborhood Revitalization Grant thanks to assistance from Western Piedmont Council of Governments staff.

Part of the North Carolina Neighborhood Program, the Community Development Block Grant will provide funding to rehabilitate 15 homes in Conover. The goals are to maintain the city's older existing housing stock, encourage a healthy living environment and improve the overall appearance of the city.

As part of the application process, WPCOG staff members worked with the City of Conover to identify eligible houses and gather information from homeowners regarding the project. The project has a 30-month completion schedule.

## Community & Regional Planning WPCOG Regional Housing Forum Recap



On November 15, 2019 the WPCOG hosted the first in a series of regional housing forums. Presentations at the event included an overview of housing data trends, a developer's perspective by Matt Gallagher from Blue Heel Development and housing lenders panel discussion with Jody Street, Senior Vice President, Peoples Bank; Steven Gunzenhauser, Vice President for Commercial Lending, BB&T; and Darrell Johnson, Senior Vice President, Capital Bank. After the presentations, forum participants broke into small groups to discuss four questions related to housing. Here are the results of the breakout groups.

Question 1: What are the barriers to new housing construction? (Top 5 Responses):

1. Lack of construction labor (subcontractor availability)
2. Lack/High Cost of infrastructure
3. Zoning/regulation restrictions
4. Lack of financing
- 5 (Tie). Construction costs
- 5 (Tie). Entities on the same page (City/builder relationships)

Question 2: What should we do regionally or locally to address our housing needs? (Top 5 Responses)

1. Attracting different funding sources/housing trust fund/loan pool
2. Local and regional (government/builder/business) partnerships
3. High School and Community College training for construction trades
4. Thoughtful planning/timely economic growth/housing plan
5. Legislation to allow for local government incentives for residential housing

Question 3: If you could wave a magic wand, what would you change to improve our housing? (Top 5 Responses)

1. Adequate workforce in construction trades
2. Equity in housing/"mixed income" communities
3. Lenders expand risk and step out of comfort zone/mitigate risk/open capital for housing
4. Replace/upgrade/expand utility infrastructure/water and sewer incentives
- 5 (Tie). Increase housing stock
- 5 (Tie). Support market rate housing (including multi-family) as much as low-moderate subsidized housing

Question 4: What are future housing topics and issues that should be discussed and explored? (Top 5 Responses)

1. Missing middle income/workforce/affordable housing
2. Lack of skilled labor in housing construction trades/construction labor workforce development
3. Infill/mixed use development
4. Public/private partnerships that have worked elsewhere/what would a private/public partnership look like in our region
- 5 (Tie). How to deal with aging housing
- 5 (Tie) Infrastructure funding and grant opportunities/how do small communities afford infrastructure

These ideas will be used to create topics for future regional housing forums.

## Small Group Results

Article by Taylor Dellinger

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### Community & Regional Planning 2020 Census Safety and Security

Data security is a top priority of the US Census Bureau. In October 2019, the US Census Bureau created a fact sheet concerning the safety and security of the 2020 Census.

Here are answers to two of the most common questions concerning the integrity of the 2020 Census.

**Question: Is it safe to answer 2020 Census questions?**

**Answer: Your responses to the 2020 Census are safe.**

Your responses to the 2020 Census are protected by law. Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the U.S. Census Bureau cannot release any information that identifies you individually. Every Census Bureau employee and contractor is sworn for life to always protect your information. Violating that oath carries stiff penalties for all Census Bureau workers - a fine up to \$250,000 and/or up to five years in prison. The Census Bureau uses your information for statistical purposes only, such as helping to inform decisions for new hospitals, schools and roads.



**Question: How does the US Census Bureau protect my information?**

**Answer: No matter how you respond, your information remains protected.**

The Census Bureau designed the information collection process with layers of security to keep your information safe and secure. Whether you respond online, by phone, by mail, or if a census employee comes to your door, your information is collected, transmitted and kept secure throughout the process. When you are on our secure website, you can verify it's safe by making sure the address begins with 'HTTPS' and includes a lock symbol. If you're visited by a census employee, know that the technology they use has the same strong security controls, and is fully compliant with the standards mandated for Federal systems.

The Census Bureau works with the federal intelligence cyber community and industry experts to stay abreast of emerging cyber threats to continuously update protections and safeguards for your information.

Article by Taylor Dellinger

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# Regional Housing Authority

## RHA Partners with Goodwill and IRS to Run VITA Site

The Vita Program generally offers free tax help to people who make \$55,000 or less and need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation to qualified individuals in local communities. They can inform taxpayers about special tax credits for which they may qualify such as Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Credit for the Elderly or the Disabled. VITA sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations. Most locations also offer free electronic filing.



*RHA employees Kala Guido, Ashley Dale and Elizabeth Moncrief are working to complete their VITA certification.*

### Site Location and Hours:

WPCOG Tax Link

1880 Second Ave NW | Hickory, NC 28601

Every Other Saturday beginning in February: 9:00am - 12:00pm

Call for appointment: 828-466-2346

### What to Bring:

- Photo Identification
- Social Security Cards and birthdates for all listed on tax return
- All income documents (W-2, 1099, W-2G, 1099-INT, 1099-DIV, etc.)
- Total amount if itemized deductions (charitable contributions, auto taxes paid, other property taxes, etc.)
- Health Insurance Marketplace Documents 1095-A, 1095-B
- For direct deposit of refund, bank documents showing routing and account numbers
- Total amount paid for child dependent care & providers ID or SS number
- Prior year 2018 tax return
- To file a "married filing joint" return electronically, both spouses must be present to sign forms.
- Schedule CEZ & Schedule C with expenses up to 10,000 can be prepares as long as income meets the VITA guidelines of \$54,000.

Article by Kala Guido

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## Transportation

### MPO Adopts New Meeting Schedule for Next Year

The Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is governed by a board called the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC is comprised of local elected officials representing the four counties, six cities, and eighteen towns across the region. For the past couple years, this board has met jointly with the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). The TCC is comprised of local community staff representing the same counties, cities, and towns of the region. Starting next year, the TAC and TCC will meet separately on the same day but at different times. The TCC, or staff group, will meet first at 1pm, while the TAC, or elected officials group, will meet second at 3:30pm. Typically, these meetings will be held the fourth Wednesday of the month at the WPCOG. Exceptions included April, November, and December, when the meetings will be held the third Wednesday of the month.

Holding separate meetings is intended to provide the TCC more opportunities for discussion before making a staff recommendation to the TAC elected representatives for their final decision. The TAC and TCC

meeting separately is also recommended by the US Department of Transportation as part of their recent Federal Certification Review completed earlier this year. Multiple other recommendations were included in the recently filed Certification report, including the need to update the Congestion Management Process as well as the Public Involvement Policy. These USDOT recommendations, along with a new round of NCDOT Prioritization (6.0) for competitive funding of transportation projects, are expected to be key MPO activities for the early half of 2020.

Article by Brian Horton

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## Workforce Development Board

### What's a WOTC



If you are an employer, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) can help put money back in your pocket by providing a federal tax credit if you hire individuals from eligible target groups who are qualified for positions but face significant barriers to employment.

Register as an employer at [www.ncworks.gov](http://www.ncworks.gov) and submit your request within 28 days of the new employee start date. Go to <https://www.nccommerce.com/grants-incentives/workforce-grants/work-opportunity-tax-credit> for more details or call your local NCWorks Career Center.

Article by Wendy Johnson



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The WPCOG will be closed on December 20 at 11:30 AM,  
so Staff can attend our Annual Christmas Party.

The WPCOG will also be closed December 24 - 26 for Christmas,  
and January 1, 2020 for New Year's Day.

Stay Connected



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[www.wpcog.org](http://www.wpcog.org)