

A wooden sign with a blue border and a yellow horizontal line. The text "LRCOG" is in large blue letters, and "LUMBER RIVER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS" is in smaller blue letters below it. The sign is mounted on a brick wall.

**LRCOG**

**LUMBER RIVER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

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# **2022-2023**

**Phone: (910) 775-9700 | Fax: (910) 521-7556**

**[www.lumberrivercog.org](http://www.lumberrivercog.org)**

# MESSAGE FROM THE LRCOG BOARD CHAIRMAN



As I begin my second year as the Chairman of the LRCOG Board of Directors, I am proud to present the annual report for fiscal year 2022-2023. This year's annual report demonstrates what a valuable asset the Lumber River Council of Governments (LRCOG) is to all of its member governments and the citizens of our region.

Among the prime examples of the value and success that the Lumber River Council of Governments has brought to our region over the past year is the acquisition of additional funds to support innovative projects to benefit our region. The LRCOG received over \$1,700,000 to support a regional water and wastewater collaboration project and almost \$2,500,000 in Rural Transformation funds to our member governments to spark economic transformation across our rural region. The Workforce Development Division has helped to cover the cost of training for more than 80 individuals to obtain their commercial driver's license to alleviate the logistical challenges faced by many of our region's businesses. Finally, in addition to serving over 200,000 meals to our region's older adults, the Aging Division has developed creative partnerships with local farmers, building our economy while providing fresh produce boxes to our region's most vulnerable citizens.

The LRCOG is truly a unique organization, where we are able to bring together subject matter experts in workforce development, transportation, aging, local government services and many other areas to enable our individual communities and region to prepare for a bright and successful future. Thank you for the opportunity to help lead the LRCOG into the future.

*Robert L. Conoly*

**Robert L. Conoly, Chairman**

## WHO WE ARE

We are one of North Carolina's 16 Regional Councils established to support community and economic development within the counties we serve. Our region - Bladen, Hoke, Richmond, Robeson, and Scotland counties - has a rich cultural heritage and history. We believe that the region's people are our most valuable regional asset. Through our programs and services, we seek to celebrate the uniqueness of our region while also focusing on its common community and economic future together.

## OUR MISSION

In its dedication to regional excellence, the Lumber River Council of Governments is proactive in identifying local and regional needs and the resources to address those needs in an effective and fair manner.

## WE VALUE

- Collaboration -
- Engagement -
- Inclusivity -
- Resiliency -
- Quality -

# 2022 - 2023

## LRCOG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

(A) = Alternate

Chair – **Robert L. Conoly** – Raeford

1st Vice Chair – **Angeline K. David** – Dobbins Heights

2nd Vice Chair – **Owen Thomas** – Lumberton

Treasurer – **David Kirby** – Dublin

### County Representatives

Bladen County	–	<b>Charles Ray Peterson</b>
Hoke County	–	<b>James Leach</b>
Hoke County (A)	–	<b>Tony Hunt</b>
Richmond County	–	<b>Tavares Bostic (July – Dec.)</b>
Richmond County	–	<b>Toni Maples (Feb. – June)</b>
Robeson County	–	<b>John Cummings</b>
Scotland County	–	<b>Tim Ivey</b>
Scotland County (A)	–	<b>Clarence McPhatter, II</b>

### Municipal Representatives

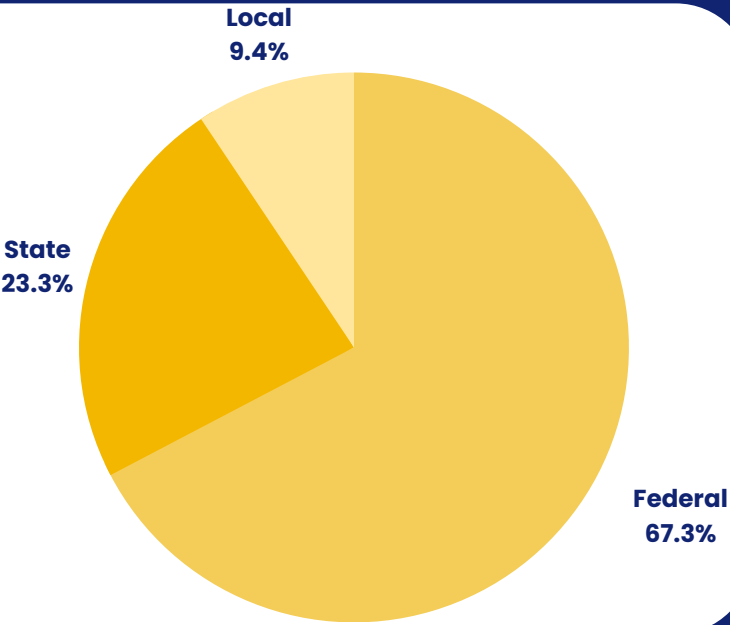
Bladenboro	Jeff Atkinson	Maxton	Virgil Hutchinson
Clarkton	Linda Croom	McDonald	Dannie Bacot
Dobbins Heights	Angeline David	Norman	Nancy Paxton
Dublin	David Kirby	Norman (A)	Tonia Collins
East Arcadia (July – Feb.)	Perry Blanks	Orrum	Jessie Stephens
East Arcadia (A)	Lillian Graham	Parkton	Doris Underwood
Elizabethtown	Rich Glenn	Pembroke	Larry McNeill
Elizabethtown (A)	Howell Clark	Proctorville	Michael Sealey
Ellerbe	Elsie L. Freeman	Proctorville (A)	Alphonso McRae
Fairmont	J.J. McCree	Raeford	Robert L. Conoly
Fairmont (A)	Jan Tedder-Rodgers	Red Springs	Murray McKeithan
Gibson	Eric Stubbs	Red Springs (A)	Caroline Sumpter
Gibson (A)	Adam Liles	Rennert	Vivian W. McRae
Hamlet	Maurice Stuart	Rockingham	Denise Sullivan
Hamlet (A)	Oscar Sellers	Rockingham (A)	Eugene Willard
Hoffman	Tommy Hart	Rowland	Jean Love
Laurinburg	Mary Jo Adams	St. Pauls	Evans Jackson
Laurinburg (A)	Mary Evans	St. Pauls (A)	Jerry Quick
Lumberton	Owen Thomas	TarHeel	Samuel Allen
Lumber Bridge	William Davis	Wagram	Robert McLaughlin
Marietta	Donna Stubbs	White Lake	Timothy Blount
Marietta (A)	Walter Powell	White Lake (A)	Mike Suggs

# FINANCE REPORT

\*Unaudited

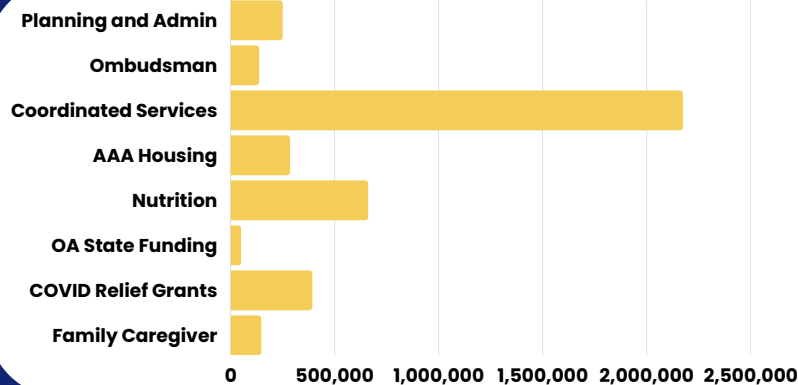
## Revenues

Federal.....	5,613,719
State.....	1,942,619
Local.....	783,252
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>8,339,590</b>



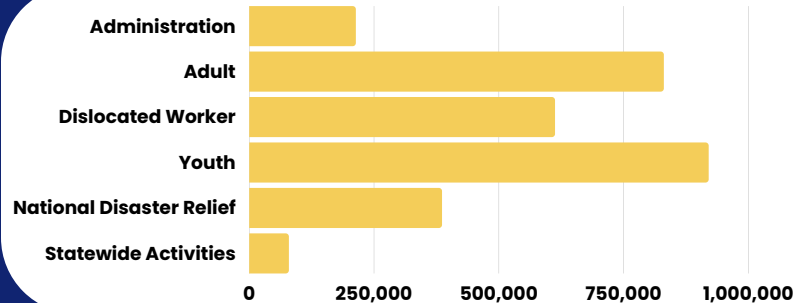
### Area Agency on Aging

Planning & Admin	248,137
Ombudsman	135,131
Coordinated Services	2,171,586
AAA Housing	283,938
Nutrition	659,108
OA State Funding	48,263
COVID-19 Relief Grants	390,966
Family Caregiver	145,600
<b>Total Aging</b>	<b>4,082,729</b>



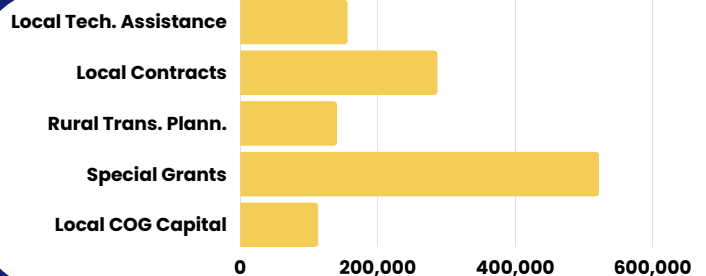
### Workforce Development

Administration	213,115
Adult	830,015
Dislocated Worker	612,049
Youth	919,829
National Disaster Relief	385,717
Statewide Activities	78,989
<b>Total Workforce Dev.</b>	<b>3,039,714</b>



### Local Government Services

Local Technical Assistance	155,650
Local Contracts	286,442
Rural Trans. Plann.	140,300
Special Grants	521,798
Local COG Capital	112,957
<b>Total Local</b>	<b>1,217,147</b>



**Total Expenditures: \$8,339,590**



# AREA AGENCY ON AGING

## Fresh Produce Boxes Provided

Bladen: 289 Home Delivered 276 Congregate

Robeson: 612 Home Delivered 323 Congregate

Scotland: 183 Home Delivered 51 Congregate



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**INSURANCE**  
SENIORS' HEALTH INSURANCE  
INFORMATION PROGRAM

\$620,358  
Saved

Total Savings

Total Clients

663  
Clients

## General Purpose Funding for Senior Centers

Bladen  
County  
Senior Center  
\$4,901

East  
Arcadia  
Senior Center  
\$4,901

Hoke  
County  
Senior Center  
\$4,901

Rockingham-  
Richmond  
Senior Center  
\$4,901

Ellerbe  
Senior Center  
\$4,901

East  
Rockingham  
Senior Center  
\*\$9,863

Hamlet  
Senior Center  
\*\*\$14,535

Scotland  
Place Civic  
Senior Center  
\$4,901

Wagram  
Active Living  
Center  
\$4,901

Pine  
Street  
Senior Center  
\$4,901

\*Center of Merit

\*\*Center of Excellence

## Health Promotion Programs

Tai Chi Participants

12

10

44

Walk with Ease  
Participants

Geri-Fit  
Participants

## Operation Fan Heat Relief Fans Distributed

26 Fans  
Hoke County

33 Fans  
Richmond County

35 Fans  
Robeson County

19 Fans  
Scotland County

## Family Caregiver Support Program



## Long-Term Care Ombudsman

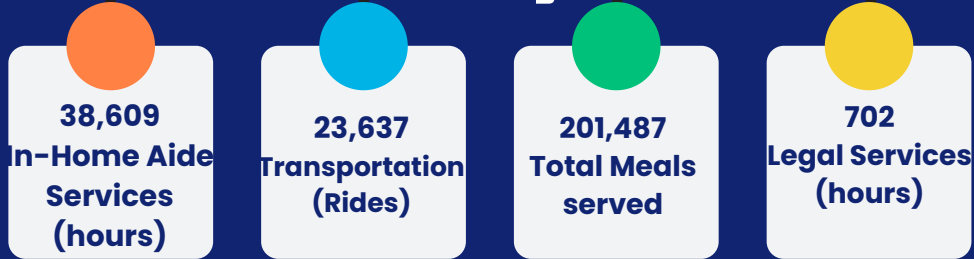
The Ombudsman Program received a total:

- 22 complaints**
- 9 were verified**
- 5 not verified**
- 8 remain open at this time**

The Ombudsman Program hosted facility trainings in several categories:

- Resident Rights - 6**
- Ageing Sensitivity - 1**
- Customer Service - 1**
- Resident Aggression - 1**
- Total staff attended: 111**
- Total number of tech. assist. calls: 54**

## Home and Community Care Block Grant



## Housing and Home Improvement (HHI)

\*HHI Services Provided in Bladen, Richmond, Robeson, and Scotland Counties



## Senior Games

2023 Lumber River Regional Senior Games celebrated its 30th anniversary, with Bladen, Hoke, and Robeson Counties taking part.



## Develop New Methods for Communication of Information

Work on the LRCOG Portal continued this year with great progress. Currently, 14 local governments have benefited from this new technology platform.

The Portal is designed to be a secure, self-service website that will give our member governments and their staff the ability to connect and share useful information, while also allowing the user to easily search, upload and view information.

Once fully operational, the following will be available:

- Maps and data from the Water and Wastewater Asset Inventory and Assessments grants
- Rural Transportation data and documents
- Information on Broadband regional services

## Grant Writing

- **Water & Wastewater Regionalization Study for Fairmont, Proctorville, Rowland, and partners** – approximately \$1,700,000 in grant funding secured.

- **Water & Wastewater Rate Study for Bladenboro, Dublin, Ellerbe, Fairmont, Gibson, Proctorville, Regionalization Partners, and Rowland** – approximately \$200,000 in grant funding secured

### - Rural Transformation Grants

- o Bladenboro - \$325,000
- o Hamlet - \$400,000
- o Laurinburg - \$650,000
- o Raeford - \$846,000
- o St. Pauls - \$150,000
- o Wagram - \$70,000



## Provided General Planning & Technical Assistance

Bladenboro - Clarkton - Dobbins Heights - Dublin East Arcadia - Ellerbe - Fairmont - Gibson - Hamlet Hoffman - Laurinburg - Lumber Bridge - Lumberton Marietta - Maxton - McDonald - Norman - Parkton Proctorville - Raeford - Rennert - Robeson County Rowland - Scotland County - St. Pauls - Tar Heel Wagram - White Lake

## Trainings and Workshops

- Completing Access to Broadband
  - BRIC
- Water and Wastewater Systems Portal
  - Code Enforcement
- Human Trafficking for Government Officials
  - Social Media for Government Officials
- School of Government Fundamentals of Supervision
  - DEQ DWI Funding Application



## Convenings and Meetings

- Region N Managers Association
- Municipal and County Association of Bladen
- Southeastern Economic Development Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Plan Steering Committee
- Southeast Crescent Regional Commission Education
  - Regional Legislative Dinner
  - Robeson Clean & Green
- NC Clean Transportation Plan Open House

## Studies and Reference Materials

- NC RISE
- Development of Federal Procurement Manual for ARPA Expenditures
  - Resilient Roads Study
- Wetland Mitigation Study

## Manager and Clerk Searches

Hoffman - Raeford - St. Pauls

## 160D Zoning Ordinance Revisions & Comprehensive Plans

Bladenboro - Clarkton - Dublin- Fairmont Hoffman - Lumberton - Maxton - Red Springs Scotland County - Wagram -White Lake

## Asset & Inventory Assessments



Dublin  
Ellerbe  
Fairmont  
Gibson  
Pembroke  
Proctorville  
Rowland

# American Rescue Plan Assistance

197 Assists



Policy development and implementation

675 Assists



Technical assists to local governments

63 Plans 145 Assists



Spending plans or budget ordinances developed

15 Meetings 131 Individuals



Education events held

36 Governments 329 Engagements



Local governments engaged

97 Strategy Development Meetings



19 Grants Supported



\$2.8 Million Awarded

Grant Support

## Lumber River RPO Activities

### State Transportation Improvement Program

- Prioritized projects for the 2024-2033 STIP
- Coordinated project submittal for the 2026-2035 STIP
- Served on statewide team that established criteria for project prioritization



### Committee Participation

- Robeson County Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- Integrated Project Delivery Team
- Planning and Environmental Linkages
- Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduction Study
- NCARPO Executive and Administrative Documents Committees





## Lumber River NCWorks Career Centers

14,231  
Individuals Received Services

104,307  
Number of Services Provided

### Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Providers:

Bladen Community College Two Hawk Workforce Services

<u>On-the-Job Training (OJT)</u>		
Total OJT Placements	OJT Wage Reimbursement to Employer	Average Wages Paid to Employer per Placement
<b>20</b>	<b>\$77,005.59</b>	<b>\$3,850.28</b>
<u>Work Experience (WEX)</u>		
Total WEX Placements	WEX Wages Paid	Average WEX Wages per Placement
<b>22</b>	<b>\$71,787.41</b>	<b>\$3,263.06</b>
<u>Occupational Skills Training (OST)</u>		
Total OST Placements	Total OST Costs	Average Amount Paid per Placement
<b>224</b>	<b>\$278,589.75</b>	<b>\$1,243.70</b>
<u>Supportive Services</u>		
Total Supportive Services	Total Supportive Services Costs	Average Amount Paid per Service
<b>119</b>	<b>\$86,728.43</b>	<b>\$728.81</b>

### Youth Programs (In and Out of School)

Providers:

Bladen Community College Partners in Ministry  
 Scotland County Schools Two Hawk Workforce Services  
 UNC-Pembroke

<u>On-the-Job Training (OJT)</u>		
Total OJT Placements	OJT Wage Reimbursement to Employer	Average Rate of Pay Wages Paid to Employer per OJT Training
<b>1</b>	<b>\$3,991.50</b>	<b>\$3,991.50</b>
<u>Work Experience (WEX), Internships and Summer Employment</u>		
Total WEX, Internships, Summer Employment Placements	WEX, Internships, and Summer Wages Paid	Average WEX, Internship, & Summer Wages per Placement
<b>107</b>	<b>\$273,839.71</b>	<b>\$2,559.25</b>
<u>Occupational Skills Training (OST)</u>		
Total OST Placements	Total OST Costs	Average Amount Paid per Placement
<b>27</b>	<b>\$48,053.59</b>	<b>\$1,779.76</b>
<u>Supportive Services</u>		
Total Supportive Services	Total Supportive Services Costs	Average Amount Paid per Service
<b>24</b>	<b>\$13,360.43</b>	<b>\$556.68</b>

## BUSINESS SERVICES

The Lumber River Workforce Development Board in conjunction with our local area NCWorks Career Centers has continued to provide services to our local businesses despite the global challenges faced. Through the use of virtual platforms, we have provided Job Fair Services; Mass Recruitment Services; Candidate Pre-Screening; Employment Matching Services; Incumbent Worker Training Information, Job Order Follow-up & Assistance, and On-the-Job Training Services.



<b>Employers Receiving Staff-Assisted Services</b>	<b>504</b>
<b>Services Provided to Employers</b>	<b>8,408</b>
<b>Job Referrals</b>	<b>19,303</b>
<b>Hire Results</b>	<b>1,628</b>



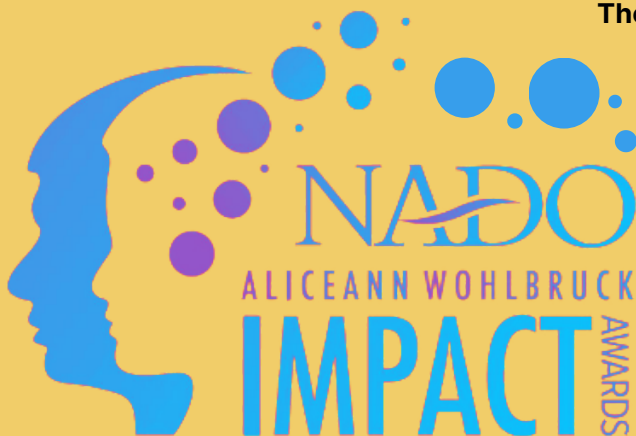
## COVID-19 Employment and Training Project

The Lumber River Workforce Development Board received funding from the US Department of Labor to operate a COVID-19 Employment & Training Project.

This project was designed to assist dislocated individuals with temporary employment positions in the area of contact tracing through the local Health Departments, placement into full-time permanent employment positions through the use of On-the-Job Training (OJT) services, and assist employers by providing an OJT wage reimbursement incentive to hire and train these individuals. The program also provided financial assistance to eligible individuals for occupational skills training to obtain CDL licensure. The COVID-19 Employment and Training Project officially ended March 31, 2023.

**At program close-out, total expenditures were \$818,972.47. The program served 126 individuals and 99 entered unsubsidized employment.**

The Lumber River Council of Governments received **three NADO Impact Awards** for the following programs:



Lumber River  
Operation  
Heat Relief

Lumber River  
Redistricting

Lumber River  
Rural  
Transformation  
Grant  
Assistance

NADO recognizes member organizations that demonstrate valuable and effective approaches to regional economic and community development and improved quality of life.

# OUR TEAM

## ADMINISTRATION

### **David Richardson, JD/MBA**

Executive Director  
dr@lrcog.org  
910-775-9752

## FINANCE

### **Jo-Annah Sinclair**

Finance Director  
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910-775-9769

### **Yvonne Isidro**

Accounting Clerk  
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910-775-9757

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

### **Grayson Cecil**

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### **Randi Dagenhart**

Regional Planner  
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### **Jan Maynor**

Special Projects Planner  
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### **Darrien Locklear**

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### **Janet Robertson, MPA**

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## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### **Patricia Hammonds, MA**

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### **Alice Williams, MBA**

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### **Alice Bell-McMillian**

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## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

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Aging Administrator  
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### **Catilyn Jacobs**

Aging Coordinator (ARPA)  
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### **Kayla Lowry**

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### **Stephanie Powers**

Family Caregiver Resource Specialist  
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### **Donna Wright**

Aging Coordinator  
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## NUTRITION

### **Ursula Selles**

Nutrition Director  
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910-775-9762

### **Camisha Laws**

Nutrition Coordinator  
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910-775-9788

## NUTRITION SITE MANAGERS

### **Barbara Bullard**

Pembroke

### **Daris Hunt**

Rowland

### **Joann Jacobs**

Laurel Hill

### **Janice Leviner**

Wagram

### **Markayla Foote**

Lumberton

### **Virginia Nicholson**

Home Delivered  
Meals Driver

### **Joseph Ray**

Red Springs





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(910) 775-9700  
www.lrcog.org  
Equal Opportunity  
Employer