



2021 Policy Agenda

NCARCOG Overview

The North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Governments (NCARCOG) represents 16 regional councils of governments (COGs), and it advocates for regional solutions to address multi-jurisdictional issues or opportunities, coordinated state and federal program service delivery, and building strategic partnerships to improve the prosperity of rural and urban North Carolina.

Policy Priorities

1. Modify rules, regulations, or legislation to include COGs as eligible entities for state and federal grants.

The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular 2 CFR 200. 64 (I) identifies a Council of Governments (COG) as an eligible local government for the purpose of applying for and receiving federal grant awards. NCGS 160A-475(1) and 153A-395 allow COGs to apply for, accept, receive, and dispense grants made available to it by the State of North Carolina, the United States of America or any of its agencies, any local government, and any private or civic agency. Some program rules and grant applications, at the state and federal levels, do not list COGs as eligible program administrators, applicants, or sub-recipients. These limitations prevent COGs from applying for regional based grants, and/or delivering regionally significant programs in each COG service area.

Action Requested:

NCARCOG requests the members of the North Carolina General Assembly add Councils of Governments to the list of eligible entities for state and federal grant programs. In addition, NCARCOG requests the members of the North Carolina delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives, and the U.S. Senate also add Councils of Governments to the list of eligible entities for federally funded grants and programs.

2. Establish COGs as the entity to develop regional pre-disaster hazard mitigation plans, and to perform regional resilience planning and coordination.

Smaller units of local governments within each COG region may have a limited capacity to apply for emergency management grants, and successfully manage all the training and compliance requirements for the duration of the grant. North Carolina COGs have successfully managed regional disaster and recovery efforts and have extensive experience with emergency management grants. The COGs could serve as designated grant recipients, grant administrators, provide regional communication and coordination activities, and provide the necessary technical assistance to ensure grant compliance standards are met. COG involvement would enhance recovery and resiliency efforts and allow more local governments to participate in funding opportunities.

COGs have coordinated, planned, and delivered planning and programming services on a multi-jurisdictional basis for the past fifty years. Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation (PDM) plans, now called the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program require local government leaders from multiple cities and counties to develop a coordinated plan to identify goals, action steps, and projects to limit the impact of natural and man-made disasters. COGs are already engaged in resiliency planning efforts within their regions, and each COG is engaged with local government leaders on a multi-jurisdictional basis. PDM/BRIC plans are required to be performed every five years, and regularly assessed to determine progress towards implementing the plan. COGs can provide planning professionals to work with local government leaders to develop BRIC plans, and to work with local governments to implement the high priority projects to limit the impacts from future disasters.

NCARCOG Contacts

Tim Ware, Executive Director | ncregionalcouncils@gmail.com
Don Rains, NCARCOG Forum Chairman | donrainsnc@gmail.com

Lee Worsley, NCARCOG Chairman | lworsley@tjcog.org
Robert Hiett, Legislative Chairman | rhiett@ucpcog.org



2021 Policy Agenda

Action Requested:

NCARCOG requests legislative and policy authorization for the North Carolina Department of Emergency Management to use COGs to provide BRIC planning services, training, grant administration, grant application assistance, or any other service requested by a qualifying local government in order for it to utilize Federal Emergency Management Agency funds.

3. Build partnerships and capacity for COGs to provide financial administration for local governments.

Local governments must meet audit, budget, and internal control requirements established by the NC Local Government Commission (LGC), and many have done so successfully over the decades. An entire generation of local government officials is leaving the workforce due to retirement, and some areas of the state may find it difficult to find the qualified professionals needed to remain compliant with LGC standards. COGs are an extension of local government, with professional finance staff, that are uniquely qualified to assist local governments in need of temporary financial services. COGs have the ability and authority to partner with the LGC, North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM), and North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) to meet the audit, compliance, and financial administration needs of local governments.

Action Requested:

NCARCOG requests the LGC's consideration for policy changes to allow COGs to serve a stronger role providing financial administration services to local governments in need of such services. In addition, NCARCOG requests consideration from the members of the North Carolina General Assembly to set aside funding to create a financial administration program to assist small local governments and municipalities with returning to a compliant status.

4. Support the expansion of high-speed broadband throughout North Carolina.

The availability of high-speed broadband, defined by the FCC a 25 megabits per second download speed and 3 megabits per second upload speed, is critical to the economic resilience of local governments throughout North Carolina. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to increase availability of high-speed broadband to ensure continuation of local government services, local economies, education, workforce training, and nearly every other aspect of private or public operations that rely on internet connectivity to function.

Action Requested:

NCARCOG supports legislative and policy that increases the availability of high-speed broadband throughout North Carolina and urges the members of the North Carolina General Assembly to continue to provide funding to study, build, and upgrade broadband infrastructure to ensure the private and public entities across the state are able to function and compete in the global economy while maintaining safe and effective public services vital to the health and welfare of North Carolina citizens.

NCARCOG Contacts

Tim Ware, Executive Director | ncregionalcouncils@gmail.com
Don Rains, NCARCOG Forum Chairman | donrainsnc@gmail.com

Lee Worsley, NCARCOG Chairman | lworsley@tcog.org
Robert Hiett, Legislative Chairman | rhiett@ucpcog.org



2021 Policy Agenda

5. Advocate for additional funding for aging, community development, infrastructure, and workforce programs.

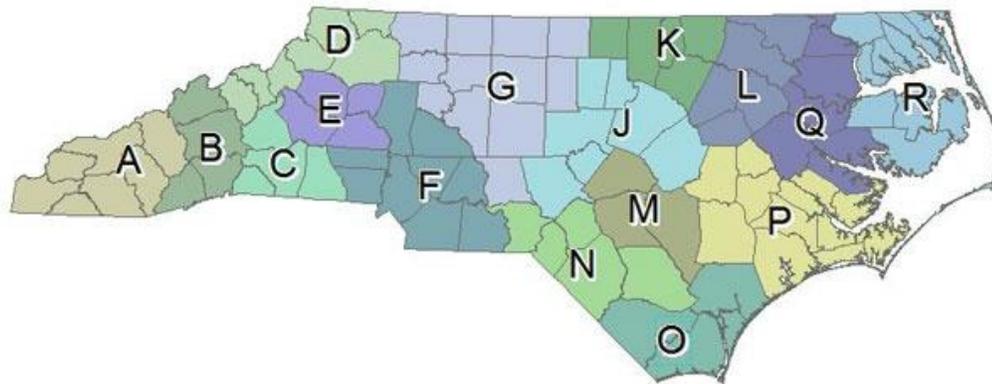
COG regions across the state are working with local government leaders to plan and coordinate services and programs for a rapidly increasing older adult population, expand or upgrade water and sewer capacity to accommodate growth and development within each region, developing partnerships to improve access to workforce housing, and coordinating workforce and/or economic development opportunities with area employers to provide the skilled workers needed for economic growth.

Action Requested:

NCARCOG requests consideration of additional funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) to support growing older adult populations, an increase in funding for water and sewer infrastructure projects, policy flexibility to increase opportunities to partner with workforce housing agencies or organizations, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to support local workforce development boards in developing innovative approaches to training citizens for skilled jobs within each region.

6. Build strategic partnerships to improve regional delivery of services.

COGs were established by units of local government, rural and urban, coming together to solve local and regional issues. COGs play a role in convening leaders within each region and coordinating with multiple types of organizations to deliver programs, projects, or services. COGs are best positioned for the delivery of federal, state, and local programs or services on a regional basis due to the ability to scale a service or program to meet the needs of each region, or to work cooperatively across multiple regions when needed or required.



Action Requested:

Advocate for an increase in the use of COGs to administer and/or implement governmental services and programs that are intended to be delivered on a multi-county basis. Advocate that COGs serve as the default mechanism to delivery regionally based services. Oppose the creation of new regional offices or regional service areas that split COG regions.

NCARCOG Contacts

Tim Ware, Executive Director | ncregionalcouncils@gmail.com
Don Rains, NCARCOG Forum Chairman | donrainsnc@gmail.com

Lee Worsley, NCARCOG Chairman | lworsley@tjocog.org
Robert Hiett, Legislative Chairman | rhiett@ucpcog.org