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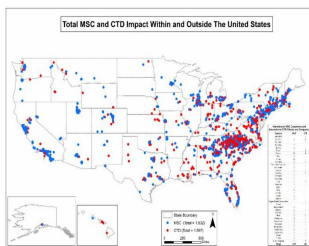
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# WPCOG - Newsletter

February 2018

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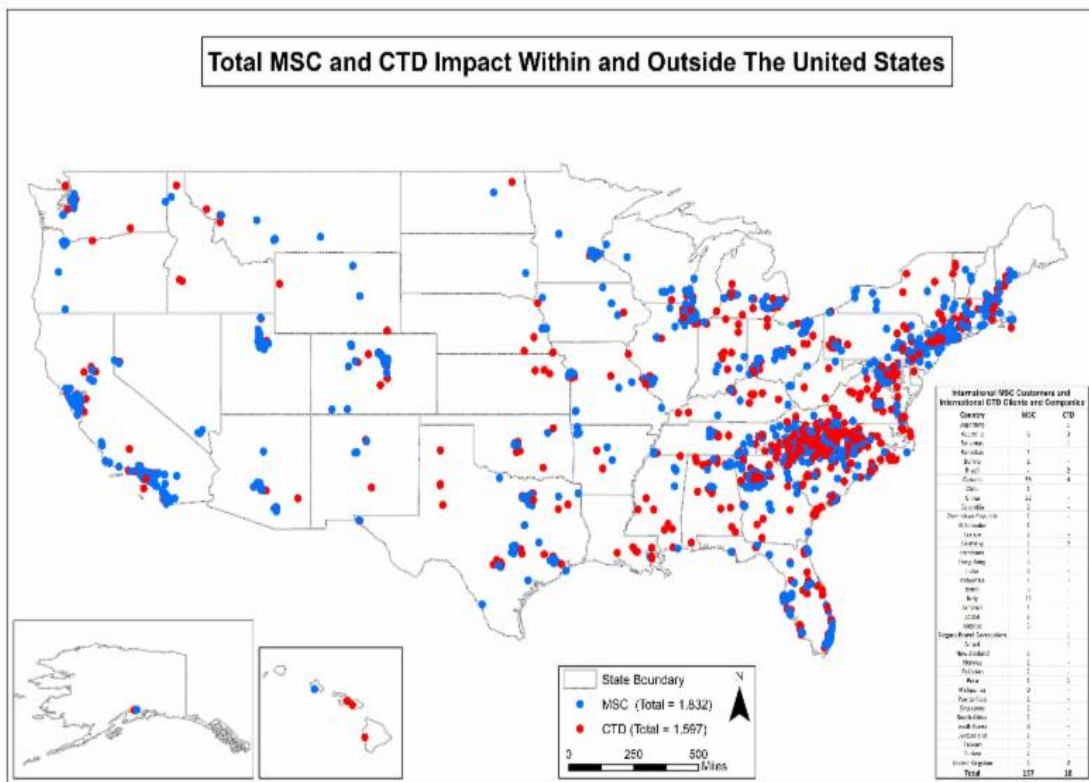
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### IT/GIS Services

#### Manufacturing Solution Center (MSC) Customer Mapping

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments' (WPCOG) 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan includes strategies to promote and support critical economic development assets in the region including the Manufacturing Solutions Center (MSC) and the Carolina Textile District (CTD). The Manufacturing Solutions Center's mission is to "help US manufacturers increase sales, improve quality, and improve efficiency to create or retain jobs." Where the Carolina Textile District's mission is "to revitalize the American Textile Industry in a way that builds on local people, assets, and heritage." CEDS action plan items specific to MSC and CTD include developing an MSC marketing plan, providing support to MSC's and CTD's mission, and using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to track MSC and CTD company contacts.

In 2014, the CTD and MSC first requested assistance from WPCOG to generate a map of their clients/companies and customers within the United States for an upcoming presentation. A few months later, WPCOG started to provide CTD and MSC with technical services on a semi-annual or ad-hoc basis to complete a series of maps of their customers within North Carolina, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) area, and in the United States, as well as internationally. The creation of the maps start with client and customer lists provided by CTD and MSC; then GIS software plots them onto a map through a process called geocoding. Geocoding is a mapping process that turns a location's physical address into a coordinate point. Next, WPCOG staff adds the points to the maps and databases to show and track CTD and MSC customer growth.



Above is an example of one of the maps completed for CTD and MSC. The map shows where CTD and MSC contacts are located within the United States and a list of contacts outside the United States. Currently, CTD has assisted 1,597 clients/companies since their May of 2013 inception; 584 of CTD's clients/companies are within NC; and 271 CTD clients/companies in the ARC area. There are 18 CTD international clients/companies in Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America.

MSC has helped 1,832 customers since July 2013, 566 MSC customers are within NC, and 252 MSC customers in the ARC area. MSC has 157 international customers on six continents (Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and South America). Click the video below to watch CTD and MSC growth within the Contiguous United States.



CTD and MSC Growth

For more information about MSC, go to [manufacturingsolutionscenter.org](http://manufacturingsolutionscenter.org); about the CTD, go to [carolinatextiledistrict.com](http://carolinatextiledistrict.com); or CEDS 2017, go to [wpcog.org/ceds](http://wpcog.org/ceds).

Article by Todd Stroupe and Taylor Dellinger

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## Regional Housing Authority

### REACH Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program

The Regional Housing Authority (RHA) offers an incredible opportunity to Section 8 Housing participants through our REACH Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program. The RHA currently has 42 families participating in our FSS program REACH. Each family is working toward self-sufficiency with the assistance of the FSS Coordinator, Kim Duncan.

The RHA has named our FSS program REACH to inspire our clients to overcome their obstacles and reach for self-sufficiency. REACH participation provides an opportunity for clients to connect with community resources, employment opportunities, and pathways to advance in their lives while teaching commitment and providing homeownership possibilities.

FSS enables Section 8-assisted families to increase their earned income and reduce their dependency on welfare assistance and rental subsidies. HUD provides funding to Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) to assist Section 8 families through their self-sufficiency journey. Each PHA must apply for the grant to receive the funding. Our Regional Housing Authority (RHA) applied for FSS funding for the first time in 2011. HUD requires grant applications each year.

The RHA works in collaboration with a Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) to secure commitments of public and private resources for the operation of the FSS program. The RHA, with the assistance from the PCC develop an FSS action plan, which is the FSS policy framework used to implement the program.

Once an eligible family is selected to participate in the program, the RHA, and the head of each participating family execute a Contract of Participation that specifies the rights and responsibilities of both parties. The term of the contract is generally 5 years. However, the contract may be extended for an additional two years for good cause.

The contract also incorporates the family's individual training and services plan (ITSP). The ITSP is the document that records the plan for the family. Each plan includes a series of intermediate and long-term goals. The plan outlines steps the family needs to take and the services and resources they may need to access to achieve their goals.

The FSS contract requires that the family comply with the lease. All FSS family members, not just family members who elected to participate in FSS must be welfare-free for the 12 consecutive months before the contract is completed, and the head of the family must seek and maintain suitable employment.

The RHA, on behalf of the FSS family, establishes an interest-bearing account. Throughout the duration of the family's participation in the FSS program, deposits are made when a family's rent increases as a result of increased earned income by the family.

The family graduates and receives their escrow funds when the family has fulfilled all of its FSS obligations under the contract on or before the expiration of the contract.

If you are interested in learning more about our FSS program REACH, please contact Kim Duncan at 828-485-4299 or Kala Guido at 828-485-4282.

[REACH Informational Flyer](#)

Article by Kala Guido

## Nursing & Healthcare Career Pathway



In December, the Western Piedmont region's Healthcare employers, educators and workforce partners met to start collaboration efforts to certify a Nursing and Healthcare Career Pathway. This meeting included an employer panel with topics including employment and talent needs in the industry. WPWDB chose to certify this pathway to meet the growing Healthcare demands in our area. The Pathway will work to help bring awareness to the career opportunities in the Healthcare field. It will also provide a path with on and off ramps ranging from high school through the course of an individual's working life.

Career pathways have the endorsement of the Division of Workforce Solutions, making them eligible for targeted grant funds.

Article by Wendy Johnson

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**Area Agency on Aging**  
Heart Health

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 1 out of every 4 deaths in the United States is a result from some form of heart disease and is known to be the leading cause of death in both men and women, especially those over 65. While the statistics may be frightening, there are small steps that can be made in preventing heart disease such as making healthy choices and managing the health conditions we do have. The American Heart Association suggests the following small steps for big improvements:

**Get Active:**

Even two or three 10-15 minute bursts of exercise each day can lead to big gains in the long run!

**Eat Better:**

A balanced diet doesn't happen overnight. Making little changes to your plate, like adding color to each meal, can help you form habits that will stick!



**Lose Weight:**

Maintaining a healthy weight is important for your health. Learning to balance healthy eating and physical activity can help you lose weight more easily and keep it off for good!

**Control Cholesterol:**

Cholesterol comes from two sources: your body (which makes all the cholesterol you need) and food made from animals. Eating smart, adding color and moving more can all help lower your cholesterol.

**Manage Blood Pressure:**

Stress and poor diet have both been linked to high blood pressure, so it's important to be well and eat smart to help positively influence our blood pressure numbers.

**Reduce Blood Sugar:**

Some easy ways to start are cutting out added sugars, limiting sweets and sugary beverages and choosing simple foods over heavily processed ones.

**Stop Smoking:**

Not using tobacco products is one of the best things you can do for your health - and the good news is that your lungs can begin to heal themselves as soon as you stop.

The Western Piedmont Area Agency on Aging (AAA) wants you to know; you are not alone. The AAA offers free educational workshops such as Living Healthy with Chronic Conditions and Living Health with Diabetes to help you learn more about healthy eating and living a healthy lifestyle that will benefit your heart. The AAA also offers programs such as A Matter of Balance and Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention that introduce low impact exercises that can be done anywhere.

To learn more about the health promotion workshops offered by the AAA, please contact Aging Specialist, Sarah Stamey at 828-485-4216 or visit [www.wpcogaaa.org](http://www.wpcogaaa.org).

Article by Sarah Stamey

John and Mary Taylor met with one of our housing counselors on 12-1-2017 to discuss their mortgage situation. They were 5 payments behind on their first and second mortgages with Caliber Home Loans. Caliber had scheduled a Foreclosure Hearing Date of 12-18-2017.

Due to prescription medications for several medical issues, John felt it was too dangerous to perform his job duties. He quit his job on his own and took a lower paying job with irregular hours. He did not have FMLA paperwork and did not receive unemployment benefits, so his hardship was not eligible for the Hardest Hit Funds Program.

We compiled and submitted a request for mortgage assistance request package for both their 1st and 2nd mortgages to Caliber the same day via the HopeLoanPort. The HopeLoanPort is a secure portal currently being used by approximately 15 mortgage servicers and numerous housing counseling organizations nationwide. On 12-12-17, John called stating a Caliber collector called him regarding the payment status. He told them we had submitted the assistance request; however, the rep informed him they did not show receiving any documents. I called Caliber and determined their 'Portal Rep' had been out of work, and no one had acknowledged and activated the request. They asked me to fax and email the package, which I did the same day.

Mary called 5 days later; they received a letter from Caliber letter showing they were approved for loan modifications on both mortgages. The Foreclosure hearing Date was suspended. I met with them on 12-19-17 to review and sign the Loan Modification Agreements. On their first mortgage, they were approved for the following modifications: Deferred principal balance of \$12,000 at 0% interest; interest rate drop on their remaining principal balance of 1%; new monthly payment of \$100 less which included property tax and homeowner's insurance; new maturity date of 40 years. The 2nd mortgage was modified with \$1300 in deferred principal at 0% interest; remainder principal balance at 1% vs. 6% interest; new monthly payment of \$30 vs. \$80.

I strongly encouraged the Taylors to re-build their emergency fund. Then as soon as they are able, pay extra on both mortgages to avoid staying on the 40-year repayment schedule. They understood the importance of doing so. They also plan to refinance in 2018 or as soon as possible, to obtain a lower overall interest rate and a 20-30 year term, with a local mortgage company or credit union. They were very happy with the assistance and modifications. They stated they would have been unable to come up with a lump sum for the arrearage owed. The Taylors feel our assistance absolutely allowed them to stay in their home and avoid foreclosure.

[Article by Helen Whisnant](#)

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## Community & Regional Planning

### Western Piedmont Region and the 2020 Census

Did you know that the 2020 Census is rapidly approaching? Census Day is April 1, 2020! The Census counts everyone, once, and in the place they usually reside.

Here are some quick facts about the 2020 Census:

- Residents may use the internet or their smartphone to complete the 2020 Census questionnaire (Census forms will also be delivered through the mail).
- Personal Census information is confidential and by law cannot be shared with law enforcement, the courts, immigration, or anyone for 72 years.
- Being counted in the Census is safe, quick, and very important to the future of the region and North Carolina.

**Why does the Census Matter to our region?**

### Representation

The Census is constitutionally required to apportion seats in the House of Representatives

### Funding

The US Government spent nearly \$590 billion in FY 2015 based on Census data - \$1,623 per person in the region.

### Planning

Local governments and businesses rely on Census data to evaluate how to serve their communities

The Census is a once a decade snapshot of who we are as a region, and you are an important part of that picture! For questions or information about the Census in North Carolina, contact: Bob Coats, Governor's Census Liaison and North Carolina State Data Center Coordinator-North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management at (919) 807-4781 or [Bob.Coats@osbm.nc.gov](mailto:Bob.Coats@osbm.nc.gov). WPCOG data center staff are also available to answer questions concerning the 2020 Census.

# 2020 Census



**330+**  
million  
people



**140+**  
million  
households



less than  
**9 months**  
to count every person,  
tabulate data, and produce  
the results



**1 chance**  
to succeed

Article by Taylor Dellinger



## Announcements



# THE REAL DEAL ABOUT **REAL ID**

Congress passed the REAL ID Act requiring states to issue identification that meets higher security standards.

- ✦ A single form of identification for ease of travel
- ✦ An increased security measure (*Verifies identity and residency*)
- ✦ Meets federal identification requirements for TSA and federal facilities, including military bases and nuclear power plants
- ✦ A driver license or identification card with a gold star
- ✦ Same cost as a driver license and identification card
- ✦ Must be obtained in a driver license office
- ✦ Non-REAL IDs will not have the gold star and will be clearly noted "Not for Federal Identification".
- ✦ Without a REAL ID, you will need to contact TSA and each federal facility about the additional identification required for access.

Get the complete list of requirements at  
**NCREALID.gov**

Call to schedule your appointment  
**(919) 715-7000**



[Frequently Asked Question](#) | [Real ID Brochure](#)

## Calendar of Events

### February

12 - Regional Aging Advisory Committee/STHL Meeting (12pm)

21 - NCLM Active Shooter Workshop (1pm)

27 - WPCOG Executive Committee Meeting (6pm)

28 - Greater Hickory MPO

### March

20 - WPAQC Meeting (10am)

26 - RHA Public Briefing of Administrative Plan (9am)

27 - WPCOG Policy Board Meeting (6pm)

28 - Greater Hickory MPO TAC/TCC (2pm/3:30pm)

### April

18 - Water Resources Committee Meeting (11am)

19 - Mayor/Chairman/Manager Meeting (6pm)

23 - Regional Aging Provider Meeting (2pm)

24 - WPCOG Executive

TAC/TCC (2pm/3:30pm).

29 - Regional Managers'  
Meeting (12pm)

Committee Meeting (6pm)

25 - Greater Hickory MPO  
TAC/TCC (2pm/3:30pm)

26 - WPCOG Annual  
Meeting (6pm)



Stay Connected



1880 2nd Ave NW · Hickory, NC 28601 · 828.322.9191

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