

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 to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968

August 2017



Table of Contents

Area Agency on Aging

[Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program](#)

Community & Economic Development

[Unifour Consortium HOME Program](#)

Community & Regional Planning

[Burke Co. Quality of Life Explorer Update](#)

IT/GIS Services

[WPCOG Hosts Local Government GIS Symposium](#)

Regional Housing Authority

[Section 8 Waiting List FAQ](#)

Workforce Development

[NCWorks Certified Career Pathways](#)

[Contact Information](#) | [Events Calendar](#)

IT/GIS Services

WPCOG Hosts Local Government GIS Symposium



In July, geographic information systems (GIS) professionals from across the Carolinas traveled to Hickory for the first annual Local Government Symposium. Nearly 80 persons attended the North Carolina ArcGIS Users Group (NCAUG) event at the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to watch speakers present demonstrations of GIS utilization in local governments.

The Symposium's agenda included six presentations by speakers from Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), WPCOG, Florence County (South Carolina), Town of Chapel Hill, and Mecklenburg County. ESRI spoke on "latest in ESRI Tech," WPCOG staff discussed the Burke County Quality of Life Explorer application and a presentation on Chapel Hill's parks and recreation fee reduction program spatial analysis project. Florence County gave a demonstration of their online Parcel and Zoning application, Mecklenburg County discussed their County Creek Coordination application, and WPCOG staff discussed their 'As-Built Locator' online GIS tool.

NCAUG was formed "to provide a forum for the exchange and distribution of knowledge, techniques, and data for people across North Carolina using and/or associated with software produced by the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)." NCAUG's affirms their vocation to GIS by having events, like the Local Government Symposium, which creates significant opportunities for technical expertise expansion, to network within the GIS community, and to keep up with the latest GIS developments and trends (NCAUG's Mission).

Last year, The Local Government Symposium idea came to fruition after NCAUG decided to merge their Eastern and Western Symposiums into a single-local-government-GIS-themed meeting and keep WPCOG as the host. Before the Government Symposium, WPCOG hosted their Western Symposium for nine years.



For more information about NCAUG and future GIS events, you can visit their website at www.ncaug.com.

Article by Todd Stroupe

Regional Housing Authority

Section 8 Waiting List - Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How did my position on the waiting list go up instead of down?

A. The Regional Housing Authority has an open waiting list. Approximately 15 applications are received daily. Those applying may have preferences that place them on the waiting list ahead of an applicant who has already been placed and notified of their position.

Q. What are preferences?

A. The RHA has four (4) preferences for placing applicants on the waiting list. A point system is used to rank applicants who receive those preferences. Four (4) points are given to residents; three (3) points are given to applicants with a household member who is disabled, while two (2) points are given to Veterans, widowers of Veterans, or applicants with an active duty member, and one (1) point is given to homeless applicants.

Q. Why did my homeless client move down the list?

A. The RHA is receiving applications daily, and those applications take time to process. Once the process is complete, applicants are added to the waiting list in a batch. That batch of applications could

consist of 75-200 applicants. Adding 200 applicants to an already existing waiting list could change a current number drastically.

Q. How are applicants ranked if they have the same or multiple preferences?

A. Applicant ranking is as follows:

1. Participants that have been terminated from the WPCOG's HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER program due to insufficient program funding will receive 11 points.
2. Applicants that claim the residency preference (applicants who reside, work, or who have been hired to work within WPCOG's jurisdiction) will receive 4 points.
3. Applicants that include a household member who is disabled will receive 3 points.
4. Veteran Applicants will receive 2 points.
5. Homeless Applicants will receive 1 point.

The outcome of the above point system would be as follows:

- Homeless Resident Disabled Veteran Household - 10 points
- Resident Disabled Veteran Household - 9 points
- Homeless Resident Disabled Household - 8 points
- Homeless Resident Veteran Household - 7 Points
- Resident Disabled Household - 7 Points
- Resident Veteran Household - 6 Points
- Homeless Disabled Veteran Household - 6 Points
- Homeless Resident Household - 5 Points
- Resident Household - 4 Points
- Homeless Disabled Household - 4 Points
- Homeless Veteran Household - 3 Points
- Disabled Household - 3 Points
- Veteran Household - 2 Points
- Homeless Household - 1 Point
- No Preference - 0 points

Q. How did a Household who applied three months after me, get assistance before me?

A. Applicants are placed on the waiting list using the ranking system above. Each preference given to applicants is verified before assistance is offered. A Household must provide verification of their preference at the time they are selected from the waiting list. Date and time are considered. However, the point system used above indicates the order in which applicants will receive help.

Q. Who can I call about my position on the waiting list?

A. Please direct all of your waiting list inquiries to Kala Guido through the WPCOG website: www.wpcog.prg/applicants complete the contact form, and Kala will return your email. If you do not have access to email, you may call 828.485.4210 and leave a detailed message. Calls will be returned within 24 hours or by the next business day.

Article by Kala Guido

Workforce Development

NCWorks Certified Career Pathways

As North Carolina competes globally, its workforce and education partners must ensure that training for individuals matches the needs of employers. This need is fulfilled by career pathways-integrated systems of development programs that ensure the training individuals receive, meets the present and future needs of businesses.

In May 2015, the NCWorks Commission approved [NCWorks Certified Career Pathways](#) criteria to establish the standards for the development of career pathways across the state. This certification also ensures that enrollees have access to the best education, training, and work-based learning opportunities as they pursue careers in high-demand occupations. Career pathways have the

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

By September 2017, the Western Piedmont Workforce Development region will submit its first application for approval to the NCWorks Commission (NC State Workforce Board) for an Advanced Manufacturing certified career pathway. For the past year, we have been working with the regional school systems, community colleges and employers to ensure our application is robust and addresses a complete process that establishes our Advance Manufacturing Career Pathway. While our region has a well-established history of manufacturing, certifying a career pathway brings to the forefront for student, parents and jobseekers the resiliency of manufacturing training and continued job sustainability.

Article by Wendy Johnson

Area Agency on Aging Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program

It is estimated there are over 471,000 grandparents in North Carolina age 65 and over who are parenting a second time around. The reasons for these new parenting roles in retirement years are widely varied; however, the majority of grandparents view this as an opportunity for the sake of the children. Grandparents who are raising their grandchildren should especially be honored and recognized for all they are doing to care for and build security for their grandkids. This number has been growing in past years and expected to continue to grow in the future.



This new role of parenting brings with it a whole range of emotions for grandparents as well as the children. Grandparents often feel a sense of inadequacy when it comes to parenting again, as well as the emotions surrounding the absence of their adult children who are the parents. They typically are unprepared to shoulder the role of parenting a second time around during this time in their lives. Many grandparents are still working while looking toward retirement and suddenly taking on the responsibilities of parenting and added financial expenses.

Despite the challenges of raising a second generation, the majority of grandparents willingly take on this new role providing the security of keeping the family together. They also develop strong relationships with their grandchildren and provide a new path for their lives. While no two families are on the same path with parenting a second time around, they all share this common thread of providing love and stability for the children.



WPCOG Area Agency on Aging (AAA) recognizes and supports families in which grandparents have taken on a greater responsibility in the lives of their grandchildren by holding the dual role of grandparent and parent. The AAA Family Caregiver Support Program created a Back-to-School Backpack initiative specifically for grandparents raising grandchildren. School supplies and backpacks have been provided to families through a partnership with Alexander County Department of Social Services. This initiative supports grandparents' efforts to provide stability and support for their grandchildren to begin their new school year.

The Family Caregiver Support Program collaborated with organizations and businesses in Alexander and Burke Counties and provided "2017 Summer Fun Packets" to "grandfamilies" in both counties. Fun packets included information about summer activities, camps and resources available across their

county. Some organizations also offered free tickets or discounts to be included in packets for families. One of the goals of this project is to provide as much information as possible about low cost or free activities for families to enjoy across their county during the summer. The goal of the Family Caregiver Support Program is to expand this to all counties across the region in the future.

A partnership with Catawba Valley YMCA and Neighbor's Network has been created, and plans are underway to begin an initiative in Catawba County to provide a support group for grandparents and other relatives raising children. Plans are for "Parenting a Second Time Around" to begin in the fall of 2017 with an open house and will be open to the public.

For information about resources to assist Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, contact the Area Agency on Aging at 828-322-9191 or visit www.wpcogaaa.org.

Article by Mary Mitchell

Community & Economic Development

Unifour Consortium Home Program for First-Time Homebuyers

The Unifour Consortium HOME Program offers a First-Time Homebuyer Assistance Program to eligible first-time homebuyers. The program can provide homebuyer assistance up to \$5,000 toward the purchase of existing homes and up to \$7,500 towards the purchase of newly constructed homes anywhere in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties. Loan funds may only be used for down payment or closing costs to purchase a home. This assistance is in the form of 0% interest loan. There is no monthly payment on the loan. Repayment to the Unifour Consortium is required when the applicant sells, refinance, or otherwise transfers the property. If applicant keeps the property for a full ten (10) years, the Unifour Consortium will forgive half of the loan and the remaining half is to be repaid when the applicants sell, refinance or otherwise transfer the property.

To qualify the applicant:

1. Must not have owned a home in the past three years. Exceptions may be made if a person is being displaced as a result of separation or divorce.
2. Applicant must provide at least \$500 of their own funds toward the purchase of the home.
3. The applicant's gross household income must not exceed more than 80% of the area median income adjusted for family size, as provided by HUD. Income will be determined by projecting the gross household income for twelve months. Income will include all gross wages, overtime, alimony, child support, pensions, interest income, social security, income from assets, etc. Projected gross household income may not exceed the following current income limits:

2017 INCOME LIMITS BASED ON FAMILY SIZE

<u>1 Person</u>	<u>2 Persons</u>	<u>3 Persons</u>	<u>4 Persons</u>	<u>5 Persons</u>	<u>6 Persons</u>	<u>7 Persons</u>	<u>8 Persons</u>
\$29,150	\$33,300	\$37,450	\$41,600	\$44,950	\$48,300	\$51,600	\$54,950

4. The applicant must have a good credit history and be able to secure a mortgage loan from one of the Unifour Consortium's Participating Lenders.
5. The applicant must attend the Unifour Consortium First-Time Homebuyers Class through the Western Piedmont Council of Governments.

The Unifour Consortium HOME Program has assisted over 2,532 first time homebuyers since the program inception in 1996. Call Rick Oxford, Home Program Director at 828-485-4245 to see if the HOME program can assist you.

Article by Jennifer Cannon

Community & Regional Planning

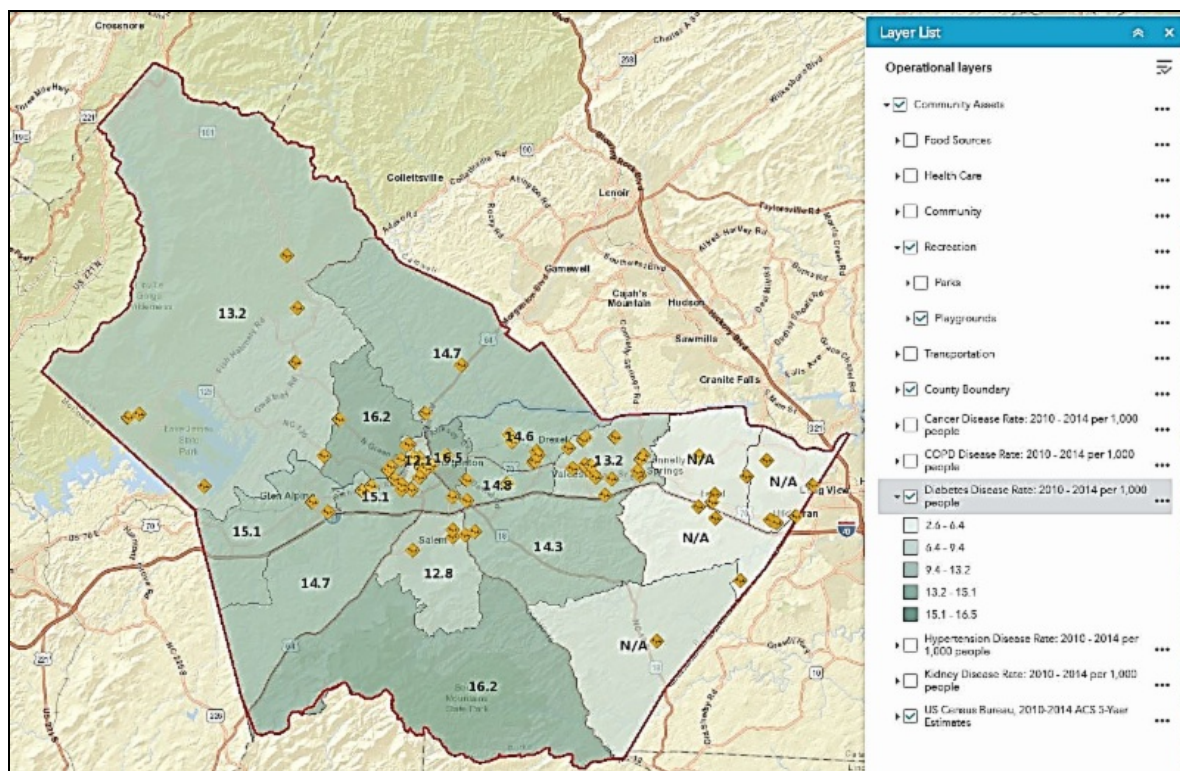
Burke County Quality of Life Explorer Update

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) Information Technology/GIS and Community & Regional Planning/Data Services Departments have developed an innovative, user-friendly, online mapping tool for Burke County. The tool, called the Burke County Quality of Life Explorer (QOL), allows stakeholders to easily identify specific areas of the County that have the most pressing health and quality of life challenges.

Several goals were achieved during the first 2 phases of the project, including data collection and the mapping of many community assets. All of this information was packaged into the QOL, so that stakeholders can analyze key health and quality of life data at the Census Tract level. Stakeholders can access data that has been categorized into 6 broad categories:

- Community (schools, child care centers, churches, EMS locations, etc.)
- Disease Rates (cancer, COPD, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease)
- Food Sources (farmers markets, grocery stores, food deserts, gas stations, etc.)
- Health Care (doctors' offices, mental health care providers, etc.)
- Recreation (playgrounds, parks)
- Transportation (proposed transit routes, traffic counts)

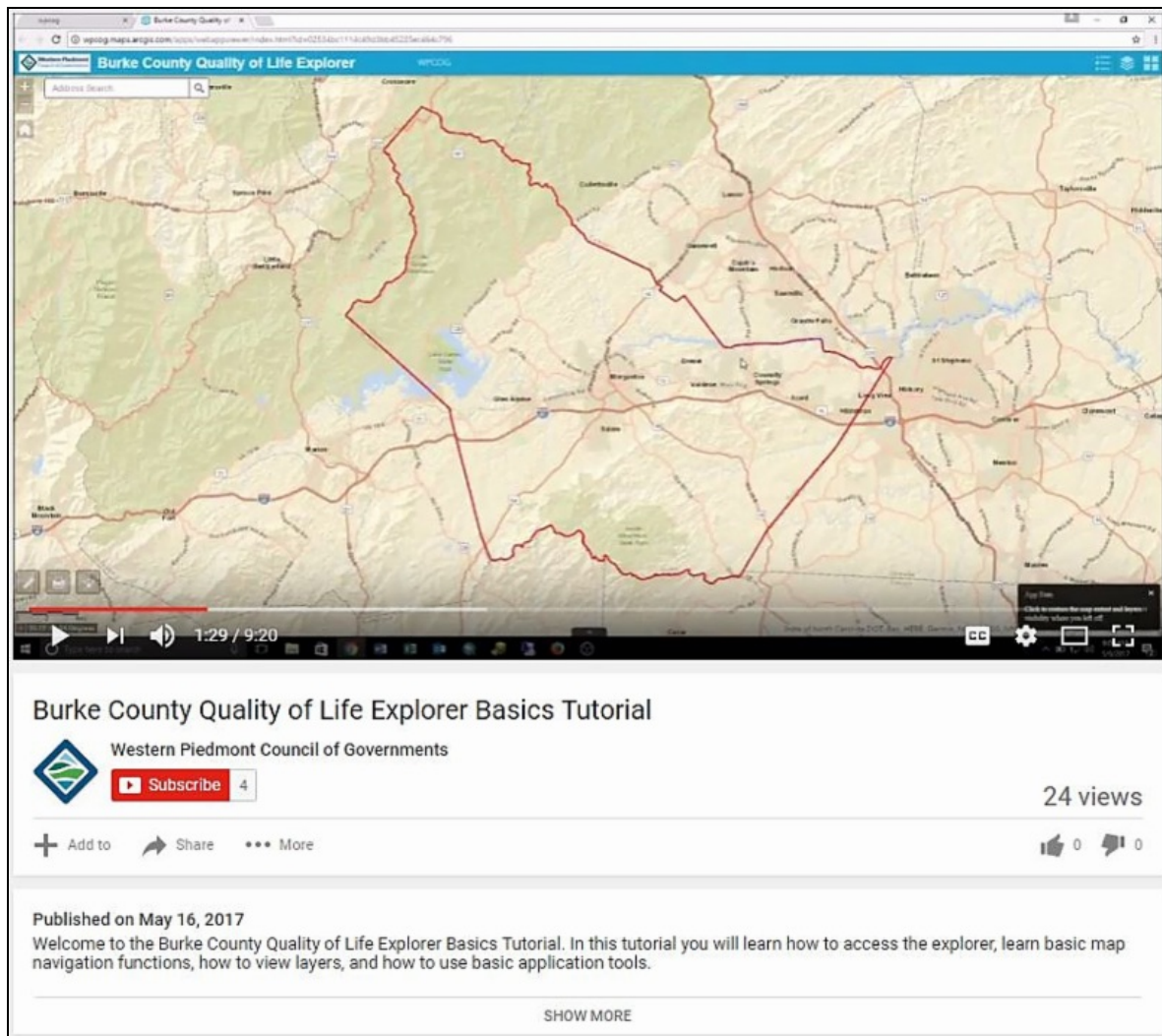
This data provides stakeholders with a comprehensive baseline picture of the many interrelated factors that combine to create a healthy community.



Phase 3 of this project will continue to address Burke County's health challenges - substance abuse, physical inactivity, poor nutrition and high chronic disease rates - by expanding and updating the tool's datasets. At present, disease data has been collected for 14 of the County's 18 Census Tracts. The remaining 4 Census Tracts are located in the eastern portion of Burke County, where residents frequently travel to medical facilities in adjacent Catawba County. Phase 3 of the project will include data acquisition from health care providers in Catawba County so that disease rates can be accurately calculated in those 4 tracts. Once completed, stakeholders will be able to perform comprehensive, data-driven assessments of healthcare and quality of life needs in all of Burke County's Census Tracts - and then apply the results of their assessments to projects designed specifically for those tracts.

Starting in August 2017, WPCOG staff will be conducting in-person QOL presentations with stakeholder groups throughout Burke County. These sessions will focus on providing stakeholders with information

about the range of data available to them, while also providing step-by-step instructions about how to use the QOL. In addition, WPCOG staff has created a dedicated YouTube channel with instructional videos for anyone to use.



The QOL will be updated annually to include current chronic disease rates, new demographic data, and field reconnaissance updates (new recreation play spaces/infrastructure, medical offices, etc.). When fully completed, the QOL will serve as an example of a highly effective decision support tool that can be readily adapted and customized for use by other counties in the WPCOG region.

If you would like to schedule a QOL training session, please contact Todd Stroupe at todd.stroupe@wpcog.org or Duncan Cavanaugh at duncan.cavanaugh@wpcog.org. The QOL tool and the YouTube tutorials can be accessed through the Western Piedmont Council of Government's website (www.wpcog.org). The QOL tool was funded through grants awarded to the WPCOG from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust.

Article by Duncan Cavanaugh

WPCOG Calendar of Events

August	September	October
02 - CEDS Meeting (3 PM)	09-12 - NADO Conference	18 - Water Resources (12 PM)
03 - WNC Water Quality Conference (8:30 AM) @ Lenoir-	19 - Western Piedmont Air	19 - Regional Managers Meeting (12 PM)

Rhyne

04 - WNC Air Quality Conference (8:30 AM) @ Lenoir-Rhyne

14 - Regional Aging Advisory Committee (12 PM)

22 - Executive Committee Meeting (6 PM)

23 - MPO TCC (2 PM) & TAC (3:30 PM)

24 - Workforce Board (8:30 AM)

24 - Mayors/Chairmen/Managers Meeting (6 PM)

Quality Committee (10 AM)

26 - Policy Board (6 PM)

27 - MPO TCC (2 PM) & TAC (3:30 PM)

23 - Regional Aging Provider Meeting (2 PM)

24 - Executive Committee Meeting (6 PM)

25 - MPO TCC (2 PM) & TAC (3:30 PM)

26 - Workforce Board (8:30 AM)

26 - Mayors/Chairmen/Managers Meeting (6 PM)

Western Piedmont Council of Governments
1880 2nd Ave NW | Hickory, NC 28601
Mail: P.O. Box 9026 | Hickory, NC 28603
P: 828.322.9191 | F: 828.322.5991

STAY CONNECTED

