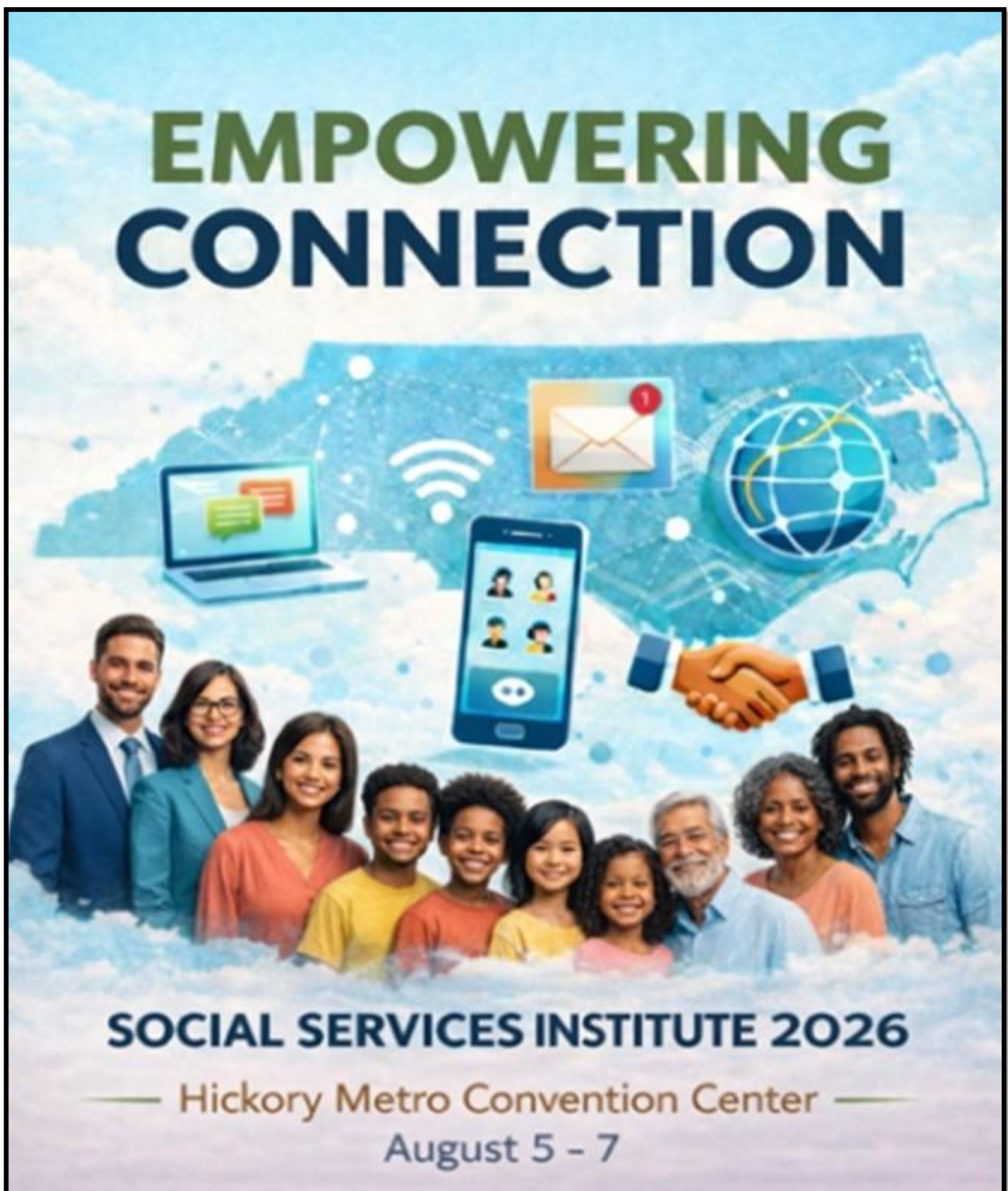
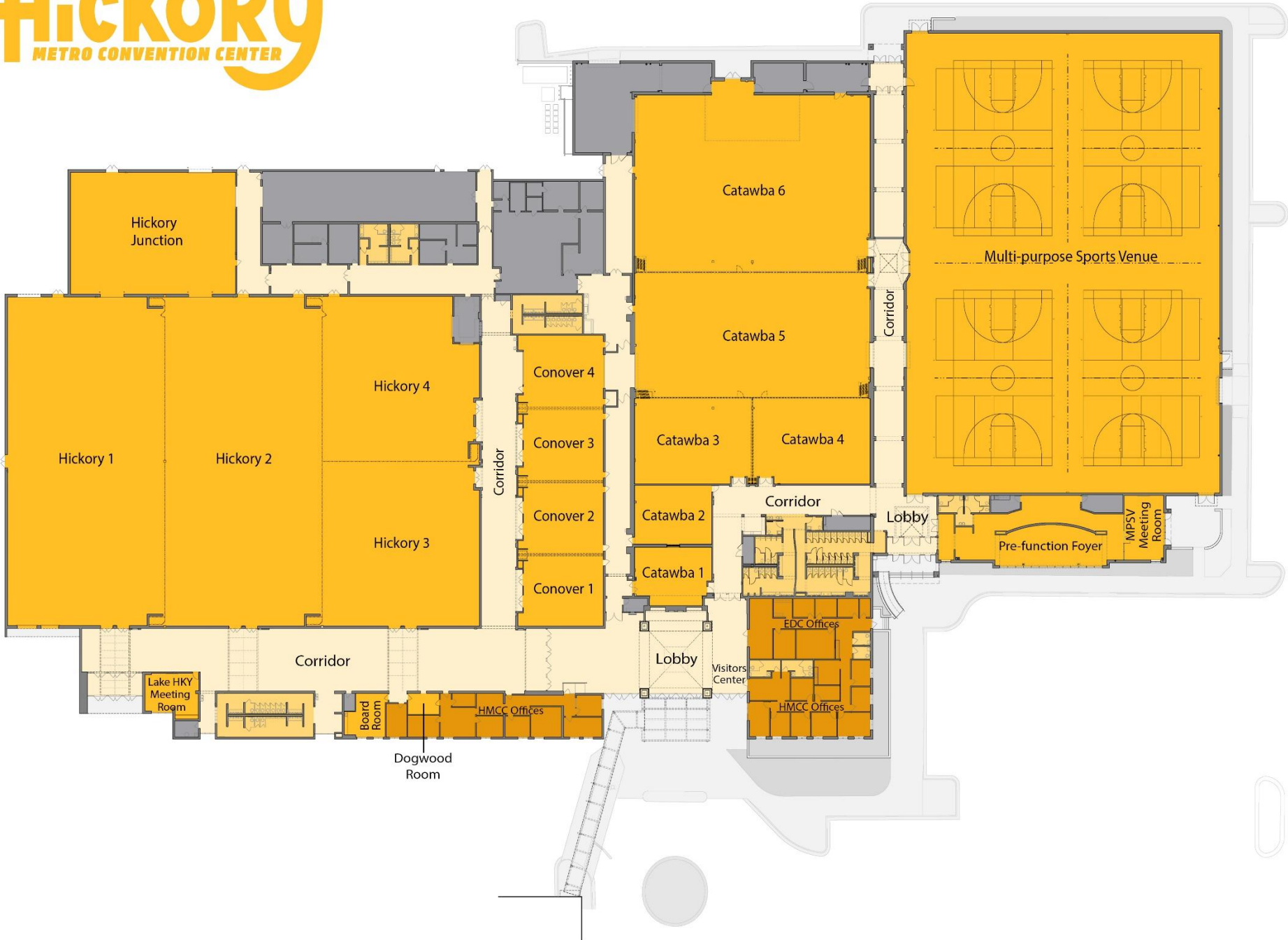




A Future Oriented Source of Leadership

SOCIAL SERVICES INSTITUTE 2026





Welcome Social Services Institute

Participants

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is my honor and privilege to welcome you to the 2026 NCACDSS Social Services Institute. This year's theme, "**Empowering Connection**," reflects the foundation of everything we do as social services professionals. The work of supporting children, families, older adults, and vulnerable individuals is rooted in meaningful relationships, connections that foster trust, strengthen communities, and create opportunities for positive change.

Across North Carolina, social services professionals serve as connectors every day. We connect families to critical resources, children to safe and permanent homes, individuals to opportunities for stability and self-sufficiency, and communities to systems of support. We also connect with one another, sharing knowledge, experiences, and innovative approaches to meet the evolving needs of those we serve.

This year's Institute provides an opportunity to strengthen those connections. Through engaging workshops, collaborative discussions, and networking opportunities, we will learn from one another, explore emerging challenges and solutions, and build partnerships that enhance our collective impact. Whether you work in child welfare, economic services, adult services, administration, or any of the many areas that make up our profession, your perspective and expertise are invaluable.

As our work continues to evolve, the need for connection has never been greater. By empowering connection among professionals, agencies, community partners, and the people we serve, we create stronger systems and better outcomes for North Carolina's families and communities.

I encourage you to fully engage in this year's Institute, share your experiences, build new relationships, challenge your thinking, and take advantage of the opportunity to learn from colleagues across the state. Together, we can continue to strengthen our profession and advance our shared mission of service.

Thank you for your dedication, your leadership, and your commitment to improving the lives of others. I am grateful for all that you do and look forward to an inspiring and impactful Institute.

Sincerely,

Korey Fisher-Wellman
Social Services Director, Burke County DSS
Chair, NCACDSS Social Services Institute 2026

SPECIAL THANKS

SSI Planning Committee:

- Korey Fisher-Wellman, Chair, Director of Burke County DSS
- Karen Powell, Executive Director, NCACDSS
- La Verne R. Bennett, Executive Assistant, NCACDSS
- Sherry Hager, Bookkeeper, NCACDSS
- Sherry Bradsher, CCR Consulting
- Carson Stanley, CCR Consulting
- Jamie Bazemore, CCR Consulting
- Carmon Morrow, Legacy Volunteer, Alamance County
- Innovation Awards Judges:
 - Kim Arnett, Caldwell County
 - Geoffrey Marett, Craven County
 - Matthew Hillman, Lincoln County

SSI Partners:

- NC Association of County Directors of Social Services (NCACDSS)
- NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- NC Association of County Boards of Social Services (NCACBSS)

SSI Sponsors:

- Vanguard Professional Staffing
- BlueCross BlueShield of NC | Healthy Blue Together
- Deloitte
- AmeriHealth Caritas North Carolina
- Beam
- YoungWilliams
- Allies4Outcomes
- NCT
- Steady IQ
- North Carolina Association of Public Community Health Plans
- Department of Insurance/SHIIP/NCSMP
- polimorphic
- CAI
- Argyle
- Northwoods
- UnitedHealthcare Community Plan
- Human Resource Solutions, Inc.
- Binti
- Cúram
- Carolina Complete Health
- Mcci
- Heart to Home Meals
- The Tipco Group
- Moseley
- CCR
- Veritas|HHS
- KPMG
- CivicReach

Special Gratitude: Institute Volunteers

Alamance County Staff
Dare County Staff
Richmond County Staff
Northampton County Staff

Rowan County Staff
Union County Staff
Wayne County Staff
Burke County

THANK YOU, INSTITUTE SPONSORS!!

LEGACY DIAMOND PLUS



DIAMOND



PLATINUM



PHOTO BOOTH



ALLIES 4 OUTCOMES

GOLD



NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC COMMUNITY
HEALTH PLANS

SILVER



polimorphic

BRONZE





GAME ROOM



FRIENDS of VOLUNTEERS



New for 2026, the SSI RESOURCE HALL is designed to be more than a traditional exhibitor space—it is an interactive learning environment focused on building connections, expanding knowledge, and strengthening the work of North Carolina's social services workforce.

The Resource Hall brings together nonprofit organizations, public agencies, advocacy groups, educational organizations, and other mission-driven partners that offer programs, services, training, technical assistance, and referral resources that can support social services professionals in their daily work.

The goal of the Resource Hall is to help attendees discover what resources and supports are available across the state while fostering meaningful partnerships that benefit children, families, adults, and communities. Participants are encouraged to engage in thoughtful conversations with Resource Hall partners, ask questions, explore collaboration opportunities, learn about innovative programs, and gather practical information that can be taken back to their agencies and communities.

Unlike a traditional exhibit hall, the SSI Resource Hall is **not intended to be a quick stop for giveaways or a space to simply walk through between sessions**. Instead, it is designed as an ongoing conference experience where attendees can spend meaningful time learning from organizations and building relationships. In fact, attendees are encouraged to view time spent in the Resource Hall as a valuable professional development opportunity. It is completely appropriate to spend an entire 90-minute workshop block in the Resource Hall if doing so allows for deeper learning, networking, and exploration of resources that are relevant to your work. Visits do not need to be limited to scheduled breaks, and attendees are welcome to return throughout the conference as often as they wish.

To encourage meaningful engagement, SSI will also provide opportunities for attendees to earn **additional raffle entries** by actively participating in the Resource Hall. These opportunities will focus on genuine interaction and learning—not simply collecting signatures or stopping briefly at a table. We encourage attendees to take advantage of these conversations, explore the wealth of expertise represented in the hall, and build connections that will continue to support their work long after the conference concludes.

SSI 2026 – Resource Hall Participants

CarePortal

CarePortal is a technology-driven platform that connects children and families in need with local churches, businesses, service organizations, and community members who can help. Working with child- and family-serving agencies in 41 states, it transforms identified needs into opportunities for direct support, including essentials such as beds, clothing, transportation, and household items, as well as mentoring and encouragement. Serving families across prevention, foster care, adoption, kinship care, and youth transition services, CarePortal helps strengthen families, prevent unnecessary family separation, and build lasting community support networks through partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, faith communities, and other stakeholders.

Creating a Family

Creating a Family is a national nonprofit that supports foster, adoptive, and kinship families, as well as the professionals who serve them, through trauma-informed, evidence-based education and training. Resources include podcasts, webinars, articles, online learning opportunities, and professional development focused on helping children impacted by trauma, loss, attachment challenges, and family disruption. The organization also promotes caregiver support and collaboration among families, child welfare professionals, educators, healthcare providers, and community organizations. Its mission is to help caregivers build resilient families and improve outcomes for children in foster, adoptive, and kinship care.

Crossnore Communities for Children

For more than 100 years, Crossnore Communities for Children has supported the well-being of children and families across North Carolina through innovative and compassionate services. Operating from hubs in Avery County, Hendersonville, and Winston-Salem, the organization works to build resilience in homes, schools, and communities. Crossnore provides an integrated continuum of services, including family preservation, foster care and adoption, therapy services, Bridging Families, Homebuilders, Tailored Care Management, and independent living support for youth.

**Family and Children's Resource Program
at the UNC School of Social Work**

The Family & Children's Resource Program (FCRP) at UNC-Chapel Hill partners with organizations serving children and families to strengthen practice, improve outcomes, and build organizational capacity. Using evidence-based approaches,

FCRP provides training, coaching, facilitation, and practice improvement services to social service agencies, schools, healthcare organizations, nonprofits, and government partners. With expertise in child welfare, trauma-informed practice, family well-being, and systems change, FCRP supports professionals and organizations across North Carolina through innovative learning and capacity-building efforts.

NC 211

NC 211 is a free, statewide information and referral service available 24/7 that connects North Carolinians with local health and human services resources. Through phone or online access, trained specialists help individuals and families find support for needs such as housing, food, utilities, healthcare, behavioral health, childcare, transportation, and financial assistance. For social services professionals, NC 211 serves as a trusted referral partner by maintaining a comprehensive, up-to-date database of community resources. The service helps improve access to assistance and strengthens coordination among service providers across North Carolina.

North Carolina Department of Justice

The North Carolina Department of Justice, led by the Attorney General, works to protect residents by supporting law enforcement, safeguarding consumers, preventing crime, and promoting public safety. The agency addresses issues affecting vulnerable populations, including domestic violence, human trafficking, elder abuse, Medicaid fraud, and patient abuse or neglect. NC DOJ also provides victim services, public education, investigative support, and consumer protection resources at no cost. The agency is scheduled to present a Scam Simulation workshop on August 6 for North Carolina's social services workforce.

Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina

Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina (PCANC) advances policies, programs, and practices that support the well-being of children and families. The organization equips professionals, organizations, and communities with tools and research to strengthen families and promote positive childhood experiences. PCANC's work focuses on three areas: coaching and training professionals, building public understanding of factors that strengthen families, and advancing family-first policies such as paid leave, home visiting programs, and tax credits.

Strong Able Youth Speaking Out (SAYSO)

Strong Able Youth Speaking Out (SAYSO) is a statewide, youth-led organization that advocates for young people in foster care and substitute care across North Carolina. Serving youth and young adults ages 14–26 who are currently or formerly in foster care, SAYSO provides leadership development, peer support, advocacy opportunities, and resources related to education, employment, housing, healthcare, and successful transitions to adulthood. The organization also encourages counties to establish local chapters where youth can connect with peers, learn about available services, and contribute to decisions affecting the foster care system.

Success Coach – Catawba County Department of Social Services

Success Coach Service is a voluntary, in-home post-permanency support program administered by Catawba County Social Services and available to eligible families in all 100 North Carolina counties. The program helps families maintain stability following adoption, guardianship, or foster care permanency through individualized coaching, advocacy, case management, and resource navigation. Success Coaches help families build on strengths, address challenges early, access community resources, and strengthen family relationships. Services are offered at no cost, can be accessed at any stage of the post-permanency journey, and are designed to promote long-term family stability and successful permanency outcomes.

OPENING SESSION: KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Sharon Hirsch serves as the President and CEO of Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina, where she leads a team that works alongside partners, families, and communities across the state by challenging the status quo for how we support children and families – leading to more positive childhoods. She has more than 30 years’ experience in nonprofit and government agency management, public relations, advocacy and child well-being. At PCANC she has led efforts to catalyze prevention investments across the State, has secured more than \$4 million in new investments in PCANC and led a successful rebrand of Prevent Child Abuse NC to Positive Childhood Alliance NC. She was named one of the Triangle Business Journal’s 25 Women in Business Award recipients for 2024 and on behalf of the agency received the Montana Institute’s Normie Award for Organizational Transformational in 2024.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: INNOVATIONS AWARDS



Graig Meyer became the Executive Director of the North Carolina Justice Center in spring of 2026 after spending twelve years as a member of the North Carolina General Assembly.

The North Carolina Justice Center has been one of the state's leading policy advocacy and legal services organizations for the last three decades. As part of its People First Agenda, the Justice Center advocates for policies that center people across six issue areas: education, health, immigration, criminal justice, workers' rights, and consumer protection.

As a trained social worker, Graig approaches his public service through the desire to help people connect to the power and resources they need for opportunity and prosperity. He has been a leading voice for public education, ensuring the state does its part to combat the ongoing climate crisis, and government transparency among many topics.

Graig spent sixteen years working in North Carolina's public schools and twelve years consulting with public schools across the country. He has published two books based on his work in schools: "More than a Mentoring Program: Attacking Institutional Racism" and "The Purposeful Principal: Practices for Leading Joyful, Successful Schools." Graig also serves as Treasurer of the Southern Regional Education Board.

Graig lives in Orange County with his partner, Kym Meyer, an environmental attorney, and they love every chance to gather their six children: Ashley, Mason, William, Felix, Rio and Sky.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Wednesday, August 6th

Opening Session — 1:00 pm-2:45pm

Sponsored by: NC Association of Public Community Health Plans, Next Chapter Technologies and SteadyIQ

Keynote Speaker:

Sharon Hirsch

Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina, CEO & President

Door Prize Giveaways-MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN

Thursday, August 7th

NCACDSS Innovations Awards Luncheon – 11:45 am-1:30 pm

Sponsored by: Vanguard Professional Staffing

Service Awards

Sponsored by: AmeriHealth Caritas, YoungWilliams and Beam

Keynote Speaker:

Graig Meyer

Director of the North Carolina Justice Center

Social Services Institute Networking/Dance – 9:00 pm-midnight

Sponsored by: Next Chapter Technologies and SteadyIQ

Dash Events DJ Sponsored by: NC Association of Public Community Health Plans

Friday, August 8th

12:00 pm-12:30 pm

Closing Session

Sponsored by DOI/SHIP and polymorphic

CLOSING REMARKS

Door Prize Giveaways-MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN



NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF BOARDS OF SOCIAL SERVICES 2025 AGENDA
PRESIDENT, MARY S. ACCOR-PRESIDING
“PUSHING BEYOND FAMILIAR”



NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF BOARDS OF SOCIAL SERVICES AGENDA		
PRESIDENT, MARY S. ACCOR-PRESIDING “PUSHING BEYOND FAMILIAR”		
Wednesday, August 5		Room: Catawba 3
8:30-9:30 Breakfast		
9:30- NCACBSS Opening		
Welcome	President Accor	
Pledge	Julie Adams-NCACBSS Board	
Invocation	Commissioner Viola Harris	
10:00- 10:50- Opening Business Session		
Recommended By-Laws Amendments Nominating Committee Report		
Nominations of Officers & Responsibilities Nomination of Directors & Responsibilities *Nominations from the floor)		
Approval of Slate of Officers/Directors		
10:50-11:50- Workshop I (Introduction of Speakers- Clyde Everette (SSI Chairman)		
	Geoffrey Marett (Craven County DSS Director)	
	Matthew Hillman (Lincoln County DSS Director)	
12:00-12:50 -Workshop Wrap-up & LUNCH		CATAWBA 3
1:00-3:00 Opening Joint Session with NCACDSS		
3:15-3:45 NCACBSS BUSINESS SESSION (Reconvened)		President Accor
President’s Report Officer Reports-Treasurer & Secretary NCACBSS AWARD PRESENTATIONS		
3:45-4:00 VANGUARD		Susan Orborne
4:00-5:00- “This is How We Do It” Workshop II		Board Members

- Focus Areas:

➤ Determine/Approve a budget

➤ Hire a director

➤ Evaluate a director

➤ Recognize employees

➤ Community Inclusiveness

➤ Determining and Agenda

➤ Conflict Resolution

➤ Employees concerns brought to a board member

➤ Team Building/Board Planning

Door Prizes	
5:30-6:30 Networking	
Thursday, August 6	Room: Catawba 3
7:30-8:30 Breakfast	
8:30-9:15 NETWORKING (Break)	
9:15-Introduction of Speaker: Clyde Everette-NCACBSS 2 nd Vice-President- SSI Chairman	
9:30-11:30-Presentation/Workshop III	
Kristi Nickodem, J.D. UNC School of Government-Author of Local Boards of Social Services in NC	
11:30 BREAK	
11:45-1:30- NCACDSS Awards Luncheon	
1:35- 2:35 Closing Business Session (Reconvened)	
Election of Officers	
2:45-3:00 Installation of Officers & Photos	
3:00 Closing Remarks	
Past President Accor	
Incoming President	
3:30 DOOR PRIZES- Adjournment	
*Friday, August 7 Invitation to join NCACDSS WORKSHOPS	
*While there will be no planned sessions for NCACBSS on Friday, August 7, 2026, an invitation has been extended to all board members to attend sessions and the evening dance hosted by NCACDSS.	

SSI 2026
CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

ALL WORKSHOPS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Wednesday, August 5					
** next to the session number indicates the workshop may be of interest to local DSS Board Members					
	Start Time	End Time	Workshop Name	Workshop Description	Workshop Location
Pre-Conference Morning					
1	8:30	12:00	Networking Breakfast Breakfast for DSS Directors, Deputy and Assistant Directors, Board Members, and Premier Sponsors ONLY		Catawba 5 & 6
2	9:30	11:30	Professional Development for DSS Directors ONLY This professional development session will provide an overview of PER calculations and examine the fiscal and operational implications for counties if an extension is not granted for the FNS cost share provisions under HR 1. Participants will gain a clearer understanding of county financial exposure, budgeting considerations, and strategies for planning amid potential funding changes.		Catawba 4
3	All Day	All Day	NCACBSS Business Session Local DSS Board Members Only		Catawba 3
Session One					
1	3:30	5:00	NCACBSS Business Session Local DSS Board Members Only		Catawba 3
2	3:30	5:00	Director Space		Catawba 4
3	3:30	5:00	North Carolina Practice Models for Child Welfare and Adult Services (Part I)	North Carolina's Statewide Practice Models for Child Welfare and Adult Services create a shared framework so that across all 100 counties, the populations we serve receive reliable, consistent, high-quality support. The practice models answer questions like "how we do the work," "how we make strong decisions," and "how we support better outcomes." Join this two-part workshop to learn more about the components of the Practice Models (Part I) and practical applications of the Practice Model tools (Part II).	Hickory 1
4	3:30	5:00	Empowering Connections: Navigating Medicaid Policy Changes for Non-Citizen Families Under HR1 and HB696	As policy changes under HR1 and HB696 reshape Medicaid eligibility and access for non-citizen individuals and mixed-status families, service providers, advocates, and community partners must work together to ensure families remain connected to critical healthcare. This interactive workshop will explore recent and emerging Medicaid policy changes impacting non-citizen communities, while centering strategies that strengthen trust and assist in continuity of care. Through shared learning and real-world scenarios, participants will deepen their understanding of eligibility shifts, barriers to access, and practical approaches for supporting families during times of uncertainty. Participants will leave with: A clearer understanding of Medicaid policy changes affecting non-citizen populations under HR1 and HB696 • Tools and strategies for navigating continued healthcare support • Opportunities to exchange ideas and promising practices with peers • Action steps to strengthen community connections that promote stability, resiliency, and brighter futures for all families	Hickory 2
5 **	3:30	5:00	Signal Savvy: Innovative Skills for Customer Service Success	Discover how innovative communication techniques can transform every interview and customer interaction. This workshop uncovers the hidden language of body cues and vocal signals, giving you practical tools to project warmth, competence, and confidence. Walk away with fresh, modern strategies to elevate your communication and your impact.	Hickory 3

				session fosters empathy, sparks meaningful discussion, and equips attendees with insights to drive more informed, compassionate decision-making in their organizations and communities. Disclaimer: This workshop has a capacity of 110 people as "families" participating in the simulation. Once those spots are filled, additional individuals can assist with the simulation at the provider stations or observe the participants.	
5 **	8:30	10:00	The Neuroscience of the Magic 8 Ball: How We Think, Lead, and Thrive Amid Cumulative Stress	Explore what happens in the brain and body when people are asked to make decisions, lead teams, and provide care in conditions of chronic uncertainty. Using the familiar image of the Magic 8 Ball as a metaphor for unpredictability, this workshop examines how uncertainty affects thinking, emotional regulation, communication, leadership, and organizational culture, especially in human services environments where stress is cumulative and often unavoidable. Participants will learn how prolonged stress can shape individual behavior, team dynamics, decision-making, and workplace health and culture. The workshop will also address common pitfalls that emerge in high-stress professions, including reactivity, fatigue, conflict, resistance to change, and loss of psychological safety. Through a neuroscience-informed lens, participants will explore practical strategies for staying grounded, supporting one another, and building healthier organizational responses to stress. The workshop also introduces the organizational change curve, emphasizing that meaningful change often feels harder before it begins to feel better. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of why change can trigger discomfort, how leaders can guide teams through uncertainty, and what organizations can do to move from survival mode toward resilience, alignment, and sustainable thriving.	Hickory 3
6 **	8:30	10:00	Fentanyl, Vaping and New Aged Substances: "What you need to know"	Substance use trends are changing rapidly, bringing new and serious risks. From fentanyl contamination to vaping and emerging synthetic drugs, today's landscape requires greater awareness and informed response. This session will highlight current trends, warning signs, and the connection between substance use and mental health, equipping participants with practical strategies to support individuals and communities.	Hickory 4
7	8:30	10:00	Making the Connection: Aligning the SAIH Program Assessment, Adult & Family Service Plans, and Individualized Case Management Support	This session explores how the Individualized Case Management Support Plan, embedded within the SAIH Program Assessment, aligns with the Adult and Family Service Plan to support effective, person-centered case management for SAIH applicants and clients. Participants will learn how assessment findings inform service plan goals and guide the appropriate level of case management oversight. Using practical examples, attendees will see how thoughtful planning ensures SAIH case management is individualized, purposeful, and responsive, supporting client independence, safety, and well-being while strengthening collaboration across Adult Services programs.	Conover 1

8	8:30	10:00	FNS Payment Error Deep Dive-Root Causes and Solutions	This session will provide a detailed review of year-to-date payment error trends, key root causes contributing to errors, and strategies being explored to improve accuracy and program performance. Participants will hear about current data findings, operational challenges, and ongoing initiatives aimed at reducing payment errors through process improvements, policy clarification, technology enhancements, and staff support.	Conover 2
9	8:30	10:00	Connecting the Dots: A Practical Look at Child Support and Medicaid Systems	This workshop will focus on strengthening connection, communication, and coordination between Child Support and Medicaid by exploring both the strengths and challenges of the referral process between the two programs.	Conover 3
10	8:30	10:00	Bridging Perspectives: Empowering Connection Across the SCCA Program	This training provides a comprehensive look at the Federal landscape and current State legislation to help participants understand the "why" behind our work and the compliance standards that sustain our program. We will explore how federal, state, and county requirements intersect, and why maintaining strong alignment across these levels is essential to program integrity and long-term success. Participants will learn how our organization is reinforcing these connections through a collaborative approach, including updates to the new schedule and program structure. The session emphasizes looking beyond differences in roles, departments, or perspectives and instead focusing on strategies that help us work effectively together. We will explore how to navigate situations where individuals or teams may have different approaches, and how collaboration can still move us toward shared goals.	Conover 4
Session Three					
1	10:15	11:45	NCACBSS Board Meeting Local DSS Board Members Only		Catawba 3
2 **	10:15	11:45	AI in Action: Modernizing Human Services in North	Join TipCo and leaders from Dare County DSS and Johnston County DSS for a dynamic panel discussion on	Catawba 4

			Carolina	how EVA, TipCo's AI-powered assistant for human services, is transforming agency operations. Hear real-world metrics including reduced call volumes, improved staff efficiency, and enhanced resident access to services. Plus, get a preview of what's to come with EVA's capabilities.	
3 **	10:15	11:45	Living into the Promise of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in North Carolina	The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA) was passed to "protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families." NCDHHS is working closely with county DSSs, court partners, people with lived experience, and all state- and federally recognized tribes across the state to ensure NC is meeting the intention and requirements of ICWA for any child who is a tribal member, no matter where they live. In this session, we will explore the key components of ICWA and an update on this initiative.	Hickory 1
4 **	10:15	11:45	Scam Simulation	Participants step into a high-stakes, interactive scenario that reveals just how quickly a scam can unfold—and how challenging recovery can be. Through realistic emails, phone calls, and digital traps, attendees experience the moment-to-moment decisions that lead to compromised information. After “falling victim,” they work through the complex process of reporting fraud, restoring accounts, and rebuilding digital security. This hands-on session builds awareness, sharpens critical thinking, and equips participants with practical strategies to protect themselves and their organizations from real-world threats. Disclaimer: This workshop has a limited capacity for "individuals who have experienced a scam" to participate in the simulation. Once those spots are filled, additional individuals can assist with the simulation at the provider stations or observe the participants.	Hickory 2
5 **	10:15	11:45	LMEs – The Public System's Role in Supporting People with BH/IDD and TBI	Individuals with Behavioral Health (BH), Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) need can be found across nearly every area of social services. Whether helping a family access benefits, working with a child experiencing behavioral challenges, supporting an older adult at risk of neglect, or	Hickory 3

				assisting someone experiencing an economic crisis, social services professionals often encounter situations where BH/IDD/TBI needs affect safety, stability, and service outcomes. This session will provide a brief overview of the LME's role in the public system, available resources and supports, and how partnering with LMEs can help staff identify needs, navigate referrals, reduce barriers, and connect individuals and families to the right services. Join us to learn practical information that can strengthen your work across a wide range of populations and situations.	
6	10:15	11:45	Empowering Connections: Understanding Medicaid Work & Community Engagement Changes Under HR1	As Medicaid work and community engagement requirements evolve under HR1, families and the professionals who support them face new challenges and opportunities in maintaining access to healthcare coverage and essential services. This workshop will explore how these policy changes will impact eligibility, reporting requirements, and continuity of care for individuals and families, while highlighting the critical role of county caseworkers in helping families successfully navigate transitions. Participants will examine the practical implications of work and community engagement policies, identify potential barriers for vulnerable populations, and share strategies that strengthen family-centered support systems. Through real-world examples and interactive dialogue, attendees will gain tools to: • Better understand Medicaid work and community engagement policy changes under HR1 • Support families in navigating eligibility and compliance requirements • Build stronger cross-sector partnerships that connect families to healthcare, employment, education, and community resources • Promote resilience, stability, and equitable access through coordinated community support	Hickory 4
7	10:15	11:45	Employee Retention - Leadership's Role (Directors, Deputy Directors)	Employee Retention through the lens of Leadership's Role (Directors, Deputy Directors). Employee assessments for effective coaching, building trust, and dealing with interpersonal conflict.	Conover 1

8 **	10:15	11:45	County DSS and Health Plan Partnerships for Child Welfare and Adult Services	This workshop will include presentations, a panel, and interactive exercises for our audience with our participants. The objective of the workshop is to provide an illustration of how county DSS and health plans can partner effectively to resolve problems, identify potential future challenges and work proactively to prevent resulting problems, and escalate problems that the group is unable to resolve on its own. Line supervisors and care/case managers see firsthand the myriad challenges that our mutual beneficiaries experience, especially when beneficiary needs are more complex and multiple systems are involved. See an example of leaning into the common ground of our shared focus on achieving positive and possible outcomes for those who depend on us.	Conover 2
9	10:15	11:45	Code for America and NC DHHS demonstration - Tool for FNS Work Requirements	Join DHHS and Code for America for a demonstration of a new tool developed for North Carolina to support implementation of H.R. 1 SNAP work requirements. Participants will learn how the tool can help staff identify impacted individuals, improve consistency, and support efficient eligibility and case management processes.	Conover 3
10 **	10:15	11:45	Getting Time Back: How AI is Changing the Day-to-Day for Social Services Workers	Social services workers spend a significant portion of their day on documentation, case reviews, form completion, and administrative tasks that pull them away from what they do best: working with clients, supporting families, and driving outcomes. Generative AI is beginning to change that. The tools we will demonstrate are in active use across multiple states, with a focus on child welfare and eligibility programs. Through a series of live demonstrations, we will walk through how these tools are helping workers get time back in their week. From summarizing months of case history into a visual timeline, to auto-completing disclosure forms from scanned records, to parsing intake transcripts directly into the case management system and matching families to local services in seconds, the common thread is reducing administrative load so workers can bring their full attention to the people they serve. We will also look at how AI is improving the client-facing side of service	Conover 4

				delivery, which reduces inbound follow-up and gives workers more time for the cases that need their attention. Attendees will leave with a grounded understanding of how AI is shaping the future of social services, a sense of what tools exist today and what is coming soon, and ideas for conversations to bring back to their teams, county directors, and state partners. Whether you are a front-line worker, a supervisor, or an agency leader, this session will give you a practical sense of where technology is heading and what to expect.	
Session Four					
1	1:45	3:15	NCACBSS Board Meeting Local DSS Board Members Only		Catawba 3
2	1:45	3:15	Invisible Sentence: Recognizing, Supporting, and Advocating for Children of Incarcerated and Returning Parents	On any given day, there are an estimated 2.7 million children in the US with at least one incarcerated parent (18,000+ in NC). This workshop will focus on what we know about the children, impacts of parental incarceration, available resources, and ways to collaborate to meet their needs. Participants will be encouraged to continue the conversation within their own organizations.	Catawba 4
3	1:45	3:15	Child Welfare Updates from NCDHHS	NCDHHS Division of Social Services will provide critical updates on current, upcoming, and ongoing initiatives in North Carolina child welfare services. Key topics include mitigating constituent concerns, an overview of the state's new fatality review process, training opportunities, Citizen Review Panels, and more. Get the latest news and information on wide-ranging topics across the child welfare service array.	Hickory 1
4	1:45	3:15	H.R. 1 and Payment Error Rate Reduction Strategies - State-Level Operational Review	This NCDHHS and Human Services Group- led session will be a high-level review of the approach NCDHHS has taken in partnership with county Departments of Social Services to respond to H.R. 1 and reduce our payment error rate. It will include a dive into work happening at the state level to identify root causes of errors and address them. This session will include work performed by Human	Hickory 2

				Services Group to assess state agency processes and policies, identify opportunities for improvement, and support HR1 implementation and payment error rate improvement planning. Topics may include governance, operational alignment, communication strategies, and broader system-level recommendations intended to improve program administration and outcomes statewide.	
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5	1:45	3:15	PATH NC Dashboards and Reports for Directors	Review of new PATH NC Dashboard and Reports for County Directors of Social Services	Hickory 3
6 **	1:45	3:15	Strengthening County Readiness: Cybersecurity & AI Essentials for NCDHHS Partners	This workshop equips county staff with practical knowledge to better protect sensitive data and public services in an evolving digital landscape. Participants will learn how modern cyber threats impact health and human service operations, how to identify and prevent common risks, and how artificial intelligence is influencing both security practices and daily workflows. The session includes an overview of cybersecurity best practices, safe and responsible use of AI tools, recognizing phishing and social engineering attempts, and understanding the role of county security assessments in strengthening overall readiness. County staff will learn how these assessments work, what they measure, and how to apply their results to improve local safeguards and maintain compliance with state recommendations. Designed for all experience levels, the workshop provides clear, actionable guidance to help counties enhance digital safety across programs and services.	Hickory 4
7 **	1:45	3:15	Beyond Vacancies: Innovative Workforce Solutions Supporting Agency Stability	Social services agencies face growing workforce challenges requiring flexible, innovative solutions. This interactive workshop highlights how Vanguard Professional Staffing partners with county agencies address vacancies, turnover, workload pressures, and specialized staffing needs through Encore Employment,	Conover 1

				foster care programs, and strategic workforce partnerships. Panelists will share practical examples of strengthening organizational stability, supporting staff, and developing sustainable workforce solutions. The presentation will feature Vanguard's Encore Employment Program and Out-of-County/Out-of-State Foster Care Programs as examples of strategic, flexible staffing approaches designed to meet both immediate and long-term workforce needs. Beyond simply filling vacancies, the session will focus on helping agency leaders understand and implement creative workforce options that address turnover, workload strain, organizational stability, staff support, and operational efficiency.	
8 **	1:45	3:15	NC 211: Connecting North Carolinians to Essential Resources	NC 211 is the statewide information and referral service of United Way of North Carolina, providing free, confidential assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Serving all 100 counties, NC 211 connects individuals and families to essential community resources, including food, housing, healthcare, utility assistance, disaster response services, mental health supports, and more through a trusted network of local and statewide partners. This session will provide an overview of NC 211 services, demonstrate how professionals can leverage the system to support clients, and highlight strategies for connecting individuals to timely, accurate, and comprehensive resources. Participants will gain a better understanding of how NC 211 strengthens community support systems and improves access to critical services across North Carolina.	Conover 2
9 **	1:45	3:15	Adult Multi-Disciplinary Teams	Review the opportunities available for establishing and leveraging Adult Multi-Disciplinary Teams in your community.	Conover 3
10	1:45	3:15	Immigration in Permanency Planning	Foreign-born youth in North Carolina DSS custody face unique risks when immigration status is not addressed early during permanency planning. This session equips Directors and teams with a practical, systems-level framework to identify gaps, align workflows, and build partnerships that preserve critical legal options for children. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to integrate immigration planning into existing processes,	Conover 4

				strengthening cross-agency collaboration and ensuring more stable, legally secure outcomes for this vulnerable population	
Session Five					
1	3:30	5:00	NCACBSS Board Meeting Local DSS Board Members Only		Catawba 3
2	3:30	5:00	Reimagining Foster Care: A Model for Professional Foster Parenting	The Bridging Families® Program addresses the child welfare crisis by using full-time professional foster parents and a dedicated support team to help children safely achieve permanency with family. The model centers on reunification and includes professional foster parents, a home-based supervisor, a case manager working alongside biological parents, and a licensed clinician providing therapy and consultation. The program is built around welcoming, relationship-based practice. Parents are engaged from day one, included in decision-making, and supported through strategies that reduce stigma and shame while promoting shared parenting. Team members use Trust-Based Relational Intervention and the Sanctuary Model to create a shared language, strengthen connections, and support family progress through daily practice. Session participants will learn how core program strategies—such as Team Action Planning, Parent-to-Parent sessions, and Parenting Practice sessions—are implemented through sample tools, photos, and case examples. With support from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and philanthropic partners, Bridging Families has served nearly 100 children, with 75% discharged to permanency with family. Attendees will leave with practical strategies they can adapt in their own work and a deeper understanding of how professional foster parenting can support innovation in child welfare.	Catawba 4
3 **	3:30	5:00	From Frazzled to Energized 2.0	You spend your days holding space for everyone else's crises — who's holding space for yours? This no-fluff workshop was made for DSS and social work	Hickory 1

				professionals who know what compassion fatigue looks like because they're currently living it. We'll decode why your nervous system treats a difficult home visit like a grizzly bear attack, spot the warning signs before burnout wins, and practice science-backed micro-breaks that fit between cases... no gym bag, meditation app, or extra willpower required. You'll leave with real tools for real caseloads.	
4	3:30	5:00	Supporting Kinship Families Through Connection, Training, and Community	Child welfare professionals know that kinship caregivers need more than information alone—they need connection, practical tools, and ongoing support. Yet many agencies and organizations struggle to launch or sustain support groups and training because developing high-quality content from scratch takes significant time, staffing, and expertise. Facilitators are often left searching for engaging materials, trying to balance education with peer connection, and carrying the burden of planning sessions themselves. This conference presentation will introduce Creating a Family's Kinship Interactive Training and Support Curriculum: a turnkey, ready-to-use solution designed to help professionals confidently lead meaningful support groups or training sessions, either in person or online. Built using a circular adult education model, the curriculum combines skill-building, peer learning, and relationship-building to create groups that are both educational and engaging. Participants will learn how the curriculum addresses common barriers agencies face, including limited staff capacity, lack of consistent content, and difficulty maintaining caregiver engagement over time. We will highlight the curriculum's flexible format, ease of implementation, affordability, and ability to support both new and established groups. Attendees will also see how the curriculum can be used to cross-promote additional training opportunities and deepen ongoing caregiver engagement. The session will also explore the development process behind the kinship-specific curriculum, including how it was created with input from kinship caregivers, piloted with kinship groups across the country, and informed by lived-experience perspectives. Special attention will be given to the curriculum's use of	Hickory 2

				lived-experience videos and trauma-informed, relevant content that reflects the real-world experiences of kinship families. In addition, the presentation will include a brief overview of program evaluation findings in partnership with Basis Policy Research, highlighting caregiver/facilitator feedback, engagement outcomes, and lessons learned through implementation. Attendees will also hear insights about how different types of support groups are incorporating the curriculum into their training and support offerings. These perspectives will help demonstrate the practical impact, usability, and value of the curriculum in diverse community and child welfare settings. Attendees will leave with practical strategies, implementation ideas, and a clear understanding of how a high-quality, pick-up-and-go curriculum can help strengthen kinship caregiver support while reducing the workload on professionals facilitating these groups.	
5	3:30	5:00	Overview of Case Management Dashboards and Reports	This session will provide an overview of dashboard and reporting features within PATH NC designed to support case management. Participants will learn how to access and interpret key data, monitor case activities, and utilize reports to support case planning, compliance, and informed decision-making. The session will highlight practical applications that help improve efficiency and oversight in practice.	Hickory 3
6	3:30	5:00	H.R. 1 and Payment Error Rate Reduction Strategies - Human Services Group's County Discovery, Design, and Implementation Process Work	This workshop, led by NCDHHS DSS and Human Services Group, will provide an overview of their work conducted thus far with counties as part of HR1 implementation efforts. The session will include discussion of county engagement strategies, operational observations, implementation successes, and emerging opportunities for improvement. Participants will also hear about themes identified across counties and how those findings are helping shape statewide support efforts.	Hickory 4
7 **	3:30	5:00	From “Us and Them” to “We”: Uniting Through Purpose and Connection	In every organization, connection is more than a feel-good concept—it’s the foundation of effective collaboration, shared purpose, and meaningful service. This session expands on the conference theme Empowering Connection by exploring how we move from operating in	Conover 1

				silos to building a culture where every employee feels part of a unified “we.” Through storytelling and reflection, we’ll examine how internal divides form—between programs, buildings, roles, and even long tenured staff and newcomers—and how these divides quietly shape the culture of “us and them.” Participants will learn practical strategies to bridge those gaps, strengthen awareness of the services offered across the agency, and deepen understanding of how each program’s work impacts the whole. By embracing courage, centering connection, collaboration, and curiosity, this session invites participants to reimagine what’s possible when we shift from “my program” to “our mission.” Together, we’ll explore how a culture of “we” empowers us to serve our community more effectively—and to show up for one another with greater understanding, empathy, and unity.	
8	3:30	5:00	Program Integrity in Practice: Investigating Internal SNAP Benefit Fraud	This workshop examines a real-world internal FNS fraud investigation involving the misuse of deceased client benefits. Workshop participants will follow the progression of the investigation—from the initial identification of suspicious activity through the use of death match reports, to uncovering accomplices and analyzing EBT transaction data to establish benefit misuse. The session highlights how investigative techniques, data analysis, internal controls, and employee accountability work together to protect program integrity. Participants will gain a greater understanding of fraud indicators, the importance of safeguarding confidential information, and the role every employee plays in maintaining public trust and ensuring the responsible stewardship of public assistance programs.	Conover 2
9	3:30	5:00	Resident Discharge Requirements in licensed N.C. Adult Care Homes	The workshop will focus on how to support and empower residents and include components to increase regulatory knowledge and enhance DSS & ACLS partnership.	Conover 3
10	3:30	5:00	Re-entry and Reunification Success:	This session highlights the START Program, a holistic Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and recovery	Conover 4

			Relationships Before Release	initiative located within the Onslow County Detention Center and operated through the leadership of Onslow County Department of Social Services. Grounded in a social services approach, START prioritizes recovery, connection, family stability, and long-term support for individuals impacted by substance use and incarceration. Presenters will share how strong partnerships among DSS leadership, detention center administration, the Sheriff's Office, Child Protective Services, Economic Services, Community Paramedics, behavioral health providers, and community partners have helped build a multidisciplinary model that moves beyond transactional services toward meaningful, relationship-based collaboration; providing substance use treatment, parenting education, case management, overdose prevention education, re-entry planning, and continued community-based support. Through interactive discussion and case-based examples, participants will examine successes, lessons learned, and practical strategies for building cross-system partnerships in rural detention, social services, behavioral health, and community recovery settings.	
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FRIDAY - August 7

** next to the session number indicates the workshop may be of interest to local DSS Board Members

Director Breakfast	7:30	8:30	Networking Breakfast – DSS Directors Only	Catawba 4
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Session Six

1	8:30	10:00	Executive Board Meeting DSS Directors Only		Catawba 4
2	8:30	10:00	Exploring the DSS Prevention Services Continuum for Children and Families	Hear from a panel of presenters on prevention services from FFPSA to Family Resource Centers, from Homebuilders to Success Coach and everywhere in between. Learn how these programs are helping to build strong families and prevent entry into foster care across the state. Participants will also have the opportunity to share feedback on current gaps in the service continuum to meet the needs of children and families in your communities.	Hickory 1
3 **	8:30	10:00	Communication Styles and Personalities Matter in Leadership	Effective leadership begins with understanding ourselves and others. This engaging, interactive workshop uses a brief 5-minute personality assessment to help participants identify their primary communication and decision-making style through four personality types: Lion, Otter, Golden Retriever, and Beaver. Participants will explore the strengths, challenges, motivations, and communication preferences associated with each style and learn how these differences influence workplace relationships, teamwork, conflict, and leadership effectiveness. Through discussion, self-reflection, and practical application, attendees will gain strategies for adapting their communication approach, building stronger connections, and leading more effectively across diverse personalities	Hickory 2
4	8:30	10:00	Show Me the Money: Maximizing Funding in Child Welfare	Learn how to maximize funding in Child Welfare. Topics will include an overview of the funding structure for child welfare, Federal fund sources, Daysheet coding, eligibility, and using MAC. Target group: Directors, Fiscal, Child Welfare supervisors	Hickory 3

5	8:30	10:00	Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention: What Four NC Counties Are Learning with Their University Partners — and Sharing with the General Assembly	Foster parent recruitment and retention continue to be one of the most persistent challenges facing county DSS agencies. SPARK-FC (Shaping Practice through Actionable Research and Knowledge in Foster Care) is an NC Collaboratory supported research-practice partnership pilot pairing four NC county DSS Directors (Jackson, Rowan, Rutherford, and Clay) with researchers at UNC Chapel Hill, Duke, and East Carolina University. SPARK-FC also engages directly with the NC General Assembly on behalf of counties and the families they serve. This workshop centers county DSS director voice. After a brief overview of the SPARK-FC partnership and the NC Collaboratory support model that makes it possible, the four participating directors will share, in their own words: (1) what drove them to seek a research partner, (2) what has surprised them, and (3) what evidence is changing their practice and policy. A university partner will share the principles of research-practice partnerships that are translated across county contexts, and then the workshop will close with how SPARK-FC has engaged NC legislators on behalf of county leadership and the families they serve.	Hickory 4
6	8:30	10:00	APS on the Move: Charting the Road Ahead	Ready to see where APS is headed? This session highlights how North Carolina's Adult Protective Services system continues to evolve through stronger connections across staff, counties, partners, and statewide frameworks to better serve vulnerable adults. Participants will explore the improvements driving APS into its next chapter, including enhanced practices, broader access to timely support, and stronger alignment with the frameworks that guide our work statewide. Grounded in the theme of Empowering Connection, this session highlights how these efforts strengthen collaboration, enhance consistency, and improve protective responses across the state. We will take a brief look back at past statewide goals that laid the groundwork for progress and then shift to what is ahead. Participants will learn about strategic statewide priorities designed to elevate consistency, strengthen outcomes, and support a modern, data driven APS system that aligns practice, policy, and technology. Join us for a fast-paced, forward-looking session that will leave you informed, energized, and prepared to	Conover 1

				contribute to a more responsive and connected APS system.	
7 **	8:30	10:00	Leadership Development: Strategy That Drives Impact	Connection is the engine of effective Social Services work - and it starts with leaders. Strong leaders create alignment and trust, while weak ones quietly erode both. In this practical session, Mecklenburg County leaders Michele Gasiewski and Julie Fowler will share their journey to strengthen leadership effectiveness across a large Social Services workforce. They'll outline the vision, challenges, and strategic decisions that shaped an intentional, outcomes focused approach, anchored in Situational Leadership. Participants will explore how to assess culture, identify priorities, and make high impact decisions about where to focus development efforts (and funds) to strengthen connections, build strong leaders, and drive meaningful impact. Target audience: Supervisors, managers, directors, and HR/OD professionals responsible for building leadership capacity and/or shaping leadership development strategy	Conover 2
8	8:30	10:00	Connecting the Links in the SCCA Program: Building Stronger Systems Through Collaboration and Accountability	Provider Compliance connects the links by aligning counties and providers through clear, consistent expectations. This session highlights how DCDEE will work together with all childcare staff to promote compliance with the provider agreement through communication, problem solving, and timely resolution of issues. Join us to strengthen collaboration and accountability across North Carolina. Together, we'll build momentum through hands on activities and lively discussions that inspire shared solutions and stronger understanding of reporting requirements, corrections, and documentation tied to the provider agreement. By working as one statewide team, we can reduce attendance and payment disruptions and create a smoother experience for providers and families. Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.	Conover 3
9	8:30	10:00	NC FAST Enhancements Supporting HR1 SNAP Implementation	This session will highlight recent NC FAST enhancements that will support county caseworkers in reducing payment errors in reaction to HR1. These enhancements include automation wizards for The Work Number and Online Verification System (e.g.,	Conover 4

				Unemployment Insurance Benefits), enhanced case approvals review and routing, shelter deduction error reduction enhancements, and other system updates. Presenters will discuss the operational impact of these enhancements, how they support program accuracy and efficiency, how to use them, and what counties can expect moving forward.	
Session Seven					
1	10:15	11:45	Focus on Foster Care Improving Permanency Outcomes in North Carolina	To improve safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families in North Carolina, NCDHHS continues to prioritize timely, long-term permanency for children in foster care. This session will focus on initiatives across foster care - from licensing to adoption - and strategies to improve outcomes for children in DSS custody. Key topics include working with courts, assessing safety throughout the life of a case, and the benefits of strong relationships with private agencies. The department will also provide an update on the federal "A Home for Every Child" initiative.	Hickory 1
2	10:15	11:45	From Internship to Impact: Building a Robust Social Work Field Placement Program to Address Workforce Gaps in Adult Services & Child Welfare.	This session explores how agencies can build internship programs to ensure a strong Adult Services and Child Welfare workforce pipeline. Attendees will learn practical strategies to recruit, select, and effectively place interns, as well as scale the internship program based on agency needs. A key focus is intentional, hands-on, trauma-informed training supported by staff development, field supervision, and an in-house clinical team. Interns gain real-world experience while building strong social work skills aligned with best practices such as Safety Organized Practice. The session highlights partnerships with local colleges and accredited programs to maintain a consistent, high-quality internship pipeline, as well as post-graduation outcomes, including transitioning interns into agency vacancies or supporting employment in neighboring counties through mentorship, references, licensure guidance, and encouragement of advanced education. Leave with actionable ideas to create or improve internship programs that fill vacancies with prepared staff.	Hickory 2

3	10:15	11:45	NC FAST Application and Infrastructure Modernization (AIM) Project Update	A session for Directors, Deputy Directors, supervisors, fiscal and budget staff	Hickory 3
4	10:15	11:45	Using Child Support Incentives Effectively	This discussion will provide an overview of the Federal requirements for using Child Support Incentives and strategies to use these funds to enhance services.	Hickory 4
5	10:15	11:45	Beyond the Paperwork: Unique Adoption Pathways for NC's Families	Many adoption professionals are familiar with agency adoptions, but some of the most common adoption questions come from families who are navigating the process without DSS involvement. This workshop examines the developmental, practical, and legal considerations involved in relative, stepparent, independent, and adult adoptions, helping social workers better support families seeking permanency outside of the child welfare system. Participants will explore strategies for preparing children and families for adoption, addressing post-adoption needs, and leveraging adult adoption as a meaningful permanency option for youth who have aged out of foster care. The session will also highlight how DSS agencies can serve as valuable resources to kinship caregivers and blended families pursuing relative and stepparent adoptions	Conover 1
6	10:15	11:45	Supervision in the New Eligibility Era	This workshop will focus on best practices and proven methods to effectively lead our teams through the ever-changing demands of our work in Eligibility. We will focus on time management, reporting methods to use for increased performance, case management, and self-care for leaders in Eligibility roles. Our target group will be Economic Services Supervisors, Leads, and Managers.	Conover 2
7	10:15	11:45	Learning Lab-Implementing CQI at the County Level	This interactive learning lab will provide participants with a practical introduction to implementing Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes within county offices. NCDHHS DSS and Human Services Group (HSG) staff will begin with a brief overview of CQI principles and approaches currently being used in county work. Participants will then break into small groups and work through realistic county scenarios using sample data and guided prompts to identify challenges, analyze root causes, and develop improvement strategies. DSS and	Conover 3

				HSG facilitators will circulate throughout the session to support discussion and provide guidance. The session will conclude with group report-outs and discussion focused on lessons learned and practical takeaways that participants can apply within their own counties.	
8 **	10:15	11:45	Innovate, Connect, & Empower	This workshop is a dynamic, interactive, and outcomes driven professional development experience designed for human services professionals who support diverse individuals, families, and communities. This workshop equips participants with the tools to communicate with clarity, respond with compassion, and intervene with confidence even in high stress or rapidly changing environments. Grounded in trauma informed practice, cultural humility, and sustainable workforce development, it strengthens the core competencies needed to thrive in modern human services roles.	Conover 4
9 **	10:15	11:45	When Trauma Lives in the Body: Recognizing, Regulating, and Responding to Secondary Trauma	Helping professionals are routinely exposed to the trauma experiences of others, which can lead to secondary traumatic stress and impact both personal well-being and professional effectiveness. Led by a licensed clinician, this interactive 90-minute session will explore what secondary trauma is, when it occurs, and how it affects the brain, nervous system, and body. Through case studies based on lived experiences of trauma, participants will examine their emotional and physical responses to difficult situations and discuss how those reactions influence their work. The session will focus on practical skills for recognizing signs of secondary trauma, regulating stress responses, and using co-regulation strategies to support colleagues and teams. Participants will leave with tools to better manage themselves, support others, and build resilience in trauma-exposed environments.	Catawba 3

