

Wednesday, August 5

Workshops Subject to Change

	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		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	Professional Development for DSS Directors, Deputy, and Assistant Directors ONLY		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
6	3:30	5:00	Lessons Learned on Payment Error Rate Reduction and Process Improvement in FNS/SNAP	This session will highlight key lessons learned from Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) visits conducted across counties. NCDHHS DSS presenters will share common themes, best practices observed in county operations, opportunities for improvement, and strategies counties are using to strengthen program administration and reduce errors. Participants will leave with practical ideas and approaches that can be adapted within their own agencies.	Hickory 4
7	3:30	5:00	Healthy Blue Care Together: 6-month Review and Looking Toward the Future.	The Healthy Blue Care Together team will provide an overview of the CFSP's first six months, focusing on key achievements, lessons learned, future priorities, and community collaborations that support better health outcomes for members.	Conover 1

8	3:30	5:00	Improving SNAP Interviews-Lessons Learned and Interview Guide Development	This session will focus on efforts to strengthen the SNAP interview process through increased training, and a partnership with the Centers for Budget and Policy Priorities and other stakeholders. Presenters will discuss key findings and lessons learned from interview observations and staff engagement, as well as the development of a structured interview guide intended to support consistency, improve customer experience, and reduce errors.	Conover 2
9	3:30	5:00	To Be Determined		Conover 3
10	3:30	5:00	The Adult Resource Team: The ART of Collaboration	The Adult Resource Team (ART) is a multidisciplinary collaboration among Guilford County DSS, EMS/Fire, and the Family Justice Center to address the unmet basic daily living needs of the aging and adult population in Guilford County. Many adults have no option but to use emergency services (911). The ART addresses ways to reduce citizens' dependence on the 911 system. We will also share our lessons learned since implementing the program in 2024.	Conover 4

THURSDAY - August 6
Workshops Subject to Change

Session 2					
1	8:30	10:00	NCACBSS Business Session Local DSS Board Members Only		Catawba 3
2	8:30	10:00	DSS Director Meeting DSS Directors ONLY		Catawba 4
3	8:30	10:00	North Carolina Practice Models for Child Welfare and Adult Services: Practical Applications (Part II)	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." In Part II of this workshop, learn how to put Practice Model tools to real use, explore Practice Standards, Scaling, Mapping, and more.	Hickory 1
4	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 2
5	8:30	10:00	The Neuroscience of the Magic 8 Ball: How We Think, Lead, and Thrive Amid Cumulative Stress	The Neuroscience of the Magic 8 Ball: How We Think, Lead, and Thrive Amid Cumulative Stress explores 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	Hickory 3

				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.	
6	8:30	10:00	Poverty Simulation	Step into an immersive, eye-opening experience that challenges assumptions and deepens understanding of life below the poverty line. In this interactive simulation, participants navigate real-world scenarios faced by individuals and families working to make ends meet—balancing employment, childcare, transportation, housing, and unexpected crises. The 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.	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		Catawba 3
2	10:15	11:45	DSS Director Space		Catawba 4
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	Hickory 1

				components of ICWA and an update on this initiative.	
4	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 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) needs 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 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.	Hickory 3
6	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	Hickory 4

				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 of "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.	
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	Social Workers, Supervisors, Managers/Administrators; DSS Directors; Health Plan Care Managers/Case Managers, Supervisors, Managers; Health Plan Leadership. 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.Â 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.Â 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	FNS Policy Bot Launch	The session will provide an early look at the development and implementation of the FNS Policy Bot designed to support frontline staff in navigating policy questions more efficiently and consistently. Presenters will discuss the goals of the tool, appropriate uses of the tool, lessons learned during development, and how technology is being leveraged to improve policy access, staff support, and operational consistency. The FNS Policy Bot is meant to drive down payment errors related to policy application in reaction to H.R.	Conover 3

				1 in the FNS/SNAP program.	
10	10:15	11:45	To be Determined		Conover 4
Session Four					
1	1:45	3:15	NCACBSS Board Meeting Board Members Only		Catawba 3
2	1:45	3:15	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 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.	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 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 systems-level recommendations intended to improve program administration and outcomes statewide.	Hickory 2

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	To be Determined		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, 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.	Conover 1
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 MDT's	Review the opportunities available for establishing and leveraging Adult MDT's 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 team with a practical, systems-level framework to identify gaps, align	Conover 4

				workflows, and build partnerships that preserve critical legal options for children. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to integrate immigration planning into existing processes, 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	Board Members Only	Catawba 3	
2	3:30	5:00	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 4	
3	3:30	5:00	To be Determined			Hickory 1
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. The structure is intentionally designed to improve participation and retention while making facilitation easier and more sustainable	Hickory 2	

				for staff. 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 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	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	Hickory 4

			Work	counties and how those findings are helping shape statewide support efforts.	
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 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.	Conover 1
8	3:30	5:00	To be Determined		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: Relationships Before Release	This session highlights the START Program, a holistic Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and recovery 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;	Conover 4

				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

Workshops Subject to Change

Director Breakfast	7:30	8:30	Networking Breakfast - DSS Directors Only		Catawba 4
Session Six					
1	8:30	10:00	Executive Board Meeting DSS Directors Only		Catawba 4
2	8:30	10:00	To Be Determined		Catawba 3
3	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
4	8:30	10:00			Hickory 2
5	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
6	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 continues 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 a 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	Hickory 4

				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 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.	
7	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 contribute to a more responsive and connected APS system.	Conover 1
8	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 connection, build strong leaders, and drive meaningful impact. Target audience: Supervisors, managers, directors, and HR/OD professionals responsible for building	Conover 2

				leadership capacity and/or shaping leadership development strategy	
9	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 child care 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
10	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., 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.	Conover 4
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 and develop confident, well-trained, trauma-informed professionals.	Hickory 2
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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. Target group: Child Support supervisors, Fiscal	Hickory 4
5	10:15	11:45	To be Determined		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	Conover 3

			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 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, implementation ideas, and practical takeaways that participants can apply within their own counties.	
8	10:15	11:45	To be Determined	Conover 4
9	10:15	11:45	To be Determined	Catawba 3
10	10:15	11:45	To be Determined	Catawba 4

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE AS OF 7/3/2026

ALL WORKSHOPS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE