

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE SSI CHAIR

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