CAPACITY BUILDING: UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

COSCDA – MARCH 17, 2025 – WASHINGTON, DC
VALERIE FEGANS, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

NC DEPARTMENT
of COMMERCE
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Purpose

As new funding sources become available such as American Rescue Plan Act funds and staff expertise is lost due to attrition, the need to increase awareness of programs and services, disseminate knowledge, improve services, and foster collaboration became a greater need.

The goal is to build capacity by providing access to resources, expertise, new ideas/solutions, and additional support.

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Two Approaches

North Carolina works with universities in two intentional ways to be capacity:
- Rural Community Capacity (RC2)
- Community Development Academy

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Rural Community Capacity (RC2)

RC2 is a university-based collaborative that will provide educational programming, technical assistance, capacity building, economic development consultation, and focused guidance to local governments in rural and distressed communities.

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<u>**Rural Community Capacity (RC2)**</u>

RC2 consists of two university partners:
- **Appalachian State University (West)**
- **East Carolina University (East)**

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<u>**Community Development Academy**</u>

CDA is held by the School of Government at University of North Carolina. The course is held annually and is designed for community development practitioners and covers the concepts, methods, and strategies of community economic development.

https://www.sog.unc.edu/courses/community-development-academy

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UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS FUNDING

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Funding Sources

•Appalachian State-American Rescue Plan Act via Rural Transformation Grant Fund

•East Carolina University-Grants from Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and formerly CDBG; Staff Time

•UNC-Chapel Hill-Tuition and Volunteers CDBG for Open Grants and HUD and CDBG Staff Time; Scholarships from Member Credit Unions

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ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

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RC2 Partners: Rural, Distressed, and Underserved Communities. Local Governments in Tier 1 and 2 Counties, and Rural Census Tracts in Tier 3 Counties (3 participants/community)

UNC CDA: Community Development Practitioners (individuals)

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COURSES

RC2 Pilot at Appalachian State Univ.
Walker College of Business and
East Carolina University Master of Public
Administration Program

The RC2 campus/virtual curriculum will include core courses that are required by the Department of Commerce and targeted courses that are designed by university faculty.

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COURSES

RC2 Community Resources

•**Campus and Virtual Curriculum**

•**Direct Engagement App State Faculty and REDD Staff**

•**Community Level Technical Assistance and Focused Guidance**

•**Economic Development Strategic Plans**

•**Project Implementation Grants**

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CHALLENGES

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- Navigating University Requirements
- Timing Classes-During Traditional Calendar v Breaks
- In-person v On Campus
- Ensuring Alignment with State Program Capacity Building Needs

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BENEFITS

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- Developing Relationships and Expanding Networks
- Tailoring Training to Local Government Needs
- Involving REDD Staff
- Aligning Needs for State Program Capacity Building Need
- Acknowledging & Filling Regional Needs
- Post-Classroom Technical Assistance

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REDD CONTACTS

NC DEPARTMENT
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Valerie Fegans
CDBG Director
Valerie.Fegans@commerce.nc.gov

Olivia Collier
Director of Regional Development
Commissions (ARC & SCRC)
ocollier@commerce.nc.gov

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