This report serves to highlight key activities of the past year performed by Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments and partners, as it relates to the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This report also serves as an annual update per US EDA DOC regulations. No significant changes were made to the UCPCOG Region’s CEDS before September 30, 2019.
The Vision of the Upper Coastal Region is to:

Think Regionally

Compete Globally

Act Locally
GOAL 1: Build on the Region’s Competitive Advantages & Leverage Marketplace

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve Upper Coastal Plain Region’s ability to attract, retain, and grown the diversity of investment and new employers.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS: Increase Capacity, Increase Connectivity (partnerships), Leverage Investments.

A $2 million Economic Development Administration grant will help Halifax Community College build an Advanced Manufacturing and Corporate Training Center. The U.S. Department of Commerce (USDC) announced the awarding of the grant on Dec 21, 2017. The department said in a news release the project is expected to create more than 120 jobs and nearly $19 million in private investment. The College previously finalized the contract for the architectural firm to design the facility and expects to break ground in mid-December 2019, within the deadline in the award schedule. The project will be completed in 2021.

The training center will house curriculum and short-term training programs for industrial systems technology, welding technology, and automotive systems technology. The grant will allow the college to expand the welding area and its industrial systems program, which includes solar training, robotics and computer training. The facility will also serve as a venue where area businesses and industries can upgrade the skills of their current employees, new hires and schedule other training needs.

The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments received a 2019 Innovation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) on behalf of their work creating the Simulation Station project. EDA also featured this effort in their EDA NC Monthly Newsletter. The NC Simulation Station is an on-line platform that is making electronic software games available to help those in and out of school learn more about career opportunities and their work environments. Through this partnership, simulations are available to help students play games where they can visualize themselves owning a computer workshop, serving as an independent truck driver, working inside a car garage, serving as a hospital manager, running a farm-based business, serving as a transit business operator, serving as a heavy machine operator, and more. Coupled with curriculum that is being made available to students, this resource is serving as a structured approach to exploring a career occupation in a way that aligns with how students consume information. As previously reported, the prior year a NADO Innovation Award was received for our EDA grant work with the region’s local community colleges involving the construction of new facilities. These facility development projects demonstrate the ability of the COG to capture and leverage federal funds for our local Community Colleges, so they can better serve citizens and businesses.

UCPCOG previously developed and continues its an Opportunity Zone educational and support effort for members that includes a resource web page. Meetings were held with the Town of Enfield and others where staff encouraged and joined members in participating in the NC Opportunity Zone Convening and Workshop in Raleigh in December 2018. Resources and updates have been shared regularly throughout this reporting period.

Staff continued to work very closely with Northampton County, the Town of Seaboard and West Fraser Industries and re-secured over $560K in Department of Commerce funds to build a new sewer connection line from the industry to the Town. $200K in additional funds were previously secured from Golden LEAF to offer as match for an EDA grant that was submitted in May through July of 2019. This grant is anticipated to be funded in the coming federal fiscal year. The project supports a 3-phase plant expansion and modification project needed to stay internationally competitive and retain approximately 150 jobs in the region.
GOAL 1: OBJECTIVE 2: The Region requires an effective “entrepreneurial ecosystem” to encourage development of new start-ups, support existing small business growth, and develop other entrepreneurial initiatives. STRATEGIES AND TACTICS: Increase entrepreneurial activity through creation and coordination of support programs.

UCPCOG’s Business Development Corporation previously identified the need to convert/modify the Wilson BDC to a more modern working space. In cooperation with the City of Wilson and Wilson County, a successful proposal was forwarded by Wilson Forward to the Golden LEAF Foundation’s Community Based Grantmaking Initiative to create an innovation space. This award supported the needed modifications to the BDC facility on Nash St. in Downtown Wilson which was proposed for use to fulfill the grant. However, a second building under consideration by the City was ultimately selected. As a result, a new process and plan has begun to better utilize the BDC building in Downtown Wilson. The third floor of the building, a large open space, was cleaned out and new AV equipment added. The City’s art council contributed art for display and the large meeting space is now getting regular use by the COG and government agencies. BDC is working with architects and the City Fire Marshall to determine maximum capacities and other details to open the space for public rental use.

After the retirement of long-time Executive Director, Greg Godard, the BDC’s Revolving Loan Fund responsibilities were transferred to the PDS Director, Ron Townley. This EDA backed RLF was found to be largely inactive and a Corrective Action Plan was created, submitted to, and accepted by EDA. The purpose of the plan is to investigate new administration and management structures to make the fund more active and sustainable. The decision was made to retain the fund. Meetings were held with potential lending partners and a negotiation for a formal partnership that was underway with one lender was completed with a formal MOU expected in the coming period. A new RLF Plan was also completed during the reporting period to meet updated EDA guidelines.

PDS Director worked with 6 prior and 3 new small business start-ups and expansions. They have included OMG Pimento Cheese in Wilson, Casa Mia in Littleton, a local brewery startup in Weldon, a coffee shop in Wilson, a retail strip mall in Hollister, a café/bakery startup as well as a grocery in Scotland Neck, a potential mental health & addiction treatment facility in Enfield, an on-line clothing retail start-up in Wilson, and a day care provider in the Nashville area.
As a result of the Wilson effort choosing to renovate another location, as mentioned in Objective 2, item 1 above, UCPCOG staff have been supporting the promotion of that new space and its GigEast Exchange, an “Innovation Hub” promoting and supporting small business development and entrepreneurship. This has included, strategic meetings with their staff, discussions on possible uses of EDA funds, executing a joint meeting with EDA staff on 8/20/2019 and a presentation by UCPCOG at one of their “Meetup” events on 9/17/19.

PDS Director worked extensively with both Halifax and Northampton County representatives in preparing project proposals for the Golden LEAF Community Based Grantmaking Initiative. The comprehensive projects proposals developed focus on getting “hard to employ” residents into the job market and address many areas of this report including workforce development, transportation, childcare, and more. Both Pre-proposals were submitted, invited for consideration as a full proposal, and Halifax was funded. The Halifax grant was quickly executed during this reporting period and a grand opening of the three community education centers was held 9/26/2019.

UCPCOG continued development of a “High Demand Career Initiative”. Primary objectives include to: Develop a regional talent management plan / workforce analysis to identify high demand occupations in the region; Link high demand occupations with local training providers to produce a skilled workforce; Create a regional talent management/career planning system with an easy onboarding process; Recruit and/or retain skilled workers for jobs in the region; Develop a sustainable planning and awareness campaign to support the partnership over the next 5 to 10 years.

Previously, UCPCOG initiated the UCP Regional Simulation Partnership that uses electronic software games to help in school and out of school youth learn about career occupations and their work environments. In addition, the RSP will work to provide assistance and referrals to participating youth to help them obtain additional education, training, and/or work experience needed to advance their career opportunities. The NC Simulation Station is a web resource sponsored by the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (UCPCOG) and the Turning Point Workforce Development Board (TPWDB). https://ncsimulationstation.com.

During the project period, numerous developments continued including partnerships with software developers, Northampton school system purchases of over 20 laptops to begin program implementation, and more.

UCPCOG staff engage with federal, state, regional and local partners on a regular basis to meet various sector needs and other elements of this plan. These included NC Rural Center’s Rural Day, NCSU’s Institute for Emerging Issues Re-Connect Rural & Urban Forum, and others.
GOAL 2: Establish & Maintain a Robust Infrastructure

OBJECTIVE 1: Water and wastewater systems have increasing costs in operations and maintenance and respond with associated fee increases. To create economies of scale, water and sewer systems can be better integrated and coordinated. Deferred maintenance creating operational efficiencies can also be addressed.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS: Establish resources management, planning, coordination, and investments as well as build technical capacity with local water and sewer utility providers.

This is a major focus area of the Planning and Development Services Department with a large amount of dedicated resources. UCPCOG is the leader in public sector awards for water and sewer infrastructure improvements. In the last 5 years, over 51 projects for 13 towns utilized $30,362,852 in funds.

### Completed Projects
- Enfield 2014 CDBG-I Water Improvements Grant #14-I-2655
- Seaboard 2014 CDBG-I NC 305 Sewer Grant #14-I-2664
- Enfield 2016 Disaster Recovery Act Grant #H-SAP-D-17-0012
- Scotland Neck 2014 CDBG-I Water Improvements Grant #15-I-2753
- Scotland Neck 2104 CDBG-I Sewer Improvements Grants #15-I-2752

### Active Projects
- Saratoga 2015 CDBG-I Speight School Road Sewer Grant #15-I-2756
- Saratoga 2016 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (Hwy 222) Grant #WIF1922
- Saratoga 2018 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant #WIF1965
- Saratoga 2017 NC DEQ Clean Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan #E-SRP-D-17-118
- Seaboard 2016 CDBG-I Town Wide Sewer Grant #16-I-2926
- Seaboard 2017 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan #H-SRP-17-0070
- Seaboard 2017 Golden LEAF End Stage Lagoon Rehabilitation Grant #17-096
- Seaboard 2017 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan #H-SRP-D-17-0070
- Northampton County DOC – West Fraser Grant #CU-999
- Sharpsburg 2015 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan #WIF-1902
- Sharpsburg 2017 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan #H-SRP-D-17-0068
- Enfield 2017 NC DEQ Clean Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan #E-SRP-D-17-107
- Enfield 2018 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan #WIF -1957
- Enfield 2018 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan #H-SRP-D-18-0159
- Lucama 2017 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan #H-SRP-D-17-0088
- Lucama 2017 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan #H-SRP-D-18-0160
- Whitakers 2018 CDBG-I Sewer Project

### Projects Submitted for Funds or Being Developed
- Bailey 2019 NC DEQ Clean Water State Revolving Fund
- Bailey 2019 CDBG – I Sewer
- Enfield 2019 NC DEQ Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan
- Enfield 2019 NC CDBG-I Combined Water & Sewer
- Enfield 2019 NC CDBG - NR

Continued on next page
Staff continues to compile resources such as sample surveys, other regional processes, etc. for evaluation and fit to our region. Meetings continue with the state broadband office, service providers, program operators, potential funders and others to help determine approaches.

UCPCOG received area input through a survey to member governments and localities in the region regarding broadband speeds at the community level, current providers, service satisfaction, and interest in participating with other leaders around the region on cooperative strategies to move forward.

The Upper Coastal Plain continues to engage with State officials about rural broadband deployment strategies. Staff engages in state and national broadband training and resource webinars like the recent NC 2nd Annual Gigabit Interactive and keeps them on file for future use.

Staff held a “Broadband 101” workshop for member governments February 6th, 2019 in partnership with the NC Broadband Infrastructure Office and others. It was well attended and culminated in participants agreeing to work together to seek funding for development and rural broadband implementation strategies.

As a result of all the above activities and programs, a UCP Broadband Taskforce was created to work together regionally to address unserved and underserved communities. An initial meeting was held on April 2, 2019, where initial objectives and tasks were set including applying to EDA for a Planning and TA funds to underpin the required supporting scope of work. Additional meetings have been held every other month that include strategic project development and technical education.

Staff met with 2 small towns and ECC Technologies to discuss possible project implementation technologies, costs and grants. It was determined the planning work had not been accomplished to sufficiently determine how to proceed.

Staff submitted application to EDA for a Regional Broadband planning initiative with funding expected in the coming fiscal year. Scope of work includes asset mapping, broadband literacy and education, private sector provider engagement, and other activities for underserved areas needing improvement for resilience and future growth.

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<tr>
<th>Projects Submitted for Funds or Being Developed (Continued)</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Hobgood 2019 NC DEQ Clean Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan</td>
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<td>- Hobgood 2019 CDBG – I Sewer</td>
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<td>- Whitakers 2019 NC DEQ Clean Water State Revolving Fund Grant/Loan</td>
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<td>- Woodland 2019 CDBG-I</td>
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**GOAL 2:** **OBJECTIVE 2:** Areas of our region lack adequate broadband access. High-speed broadband is a necessity for the development of resilient and successful communities. It is required for businesses to thrive and ultra-high speed broadband is critical to global competitiveness.

**STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:** Improve robust and affordable broadband access to un-served and underserved areas to meet present and future needs.
In February 2018, PDS Director, Ron Townley facilitated an industrial solar workshop for public officials for the second consecutive year. The event was held at the Center for Energy Education (C4EE) in Halifax County and included sessions on State and local permitting, health and safety impacts, taxes, real estate values and revenues, legal considerations and more. Local officials participated from around the region and across the state. The C4EE is an eastern United States hub for the renewable energy industry, a hands-on training ground for solar installations, a destination for students and families to learn about renewable energy resources, and an education and training facility for our workforce to provide the knowledge and skills needed to pursue a career in the growing renewable energy industry.

UCPCOG completed its US Department of Energy EERE-LEAP Grant titled, “Powering Energy Efficiency & Impacts Framework”. UCPCOG was awarded $477,202 with an additional $56,740 offered as match from partners. The project addresses energy efficiency needs in underserved low-income neighborhoods. The partners include the NC Clean Energy Technology Center, NC State Center for Geospatial Analytics, NC Sustainable Energy Association, University of Vermont Law School, NC Justice Center, ResiSpeak, two electric utility service providers and others. The project combines various sets of cross-referenced meta data, with smart grid technologies to identify and implement improvements to help the economic conditions of specific communities. This complex and ambitious project has significant industry and national interest. A project website with a full final report and results has been published at https://www.ucpcog.org/planning_and_development/energy_efficiency.php.

UCPCOG is participating in NC Energy Efficiency Roadmaps initiative with a wide spectrum of experts from across the state. Effort is being led by Duke University’s Nicholas Institute. As Part of NC Governor Cooper’s Executive Order 80:

a. PDS Director participated in the development and review of the new NC Energy Efficiency Roadmap led by Duke Universities Nicholas Institute.

b. Provided input on the NC DOT Clean Energy Plan at a workshop in Rocky Mount

c. Began working with NC Dept. of Environmental Quality to host a Regional Resiliency Workshop in November of 2019.

GOAL 2: OBJECTIVE 3: Continue progress in emerging clean energy sectors while maintaining necessary traditional energy sources in a manner that sustains growth while increasing resiliency.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS: Encourage balanced use of all available energy sources and promote accessibility to communities throughout the region.
GOAL 2: **OBJECTIVE 4:** The region must continue its vigilance and ensure a fair share of both state and federal transportation funds. Also, the region has had limited multi-modal transportation options, particularly in the more rural areas.

**STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:** Continue collaboration in and between the regional MPO and two RPO transportation planning groups and State to ensure that critical transportation needs are met. Design and implement a regional strategy to take the fullest advantage of CCX multi-modal distribution and transportation hub.

PDS staff and/or the Executive Director attends the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Transportation Planning Organizational Meetings on a continuing basis to ensure coordination on activities and opportunities. UCPCOG staff regularly participates in meetings with member governments. The Peanut Belt RPO administration was taken over by Halifax County and UCPCOG staff monitor that group’s activities.

After CSX corporate headquarters reconsideration of a new strategic multi-modal inland port on the eastern seaboard, the region’s CSX high-tech intermodal terminal project, the Carolina Connector, is once again moving forward at a strong pace. The facility will have a lift capacity of 110,000 containers per year. PDS continues to monitor the situation and access opportunities for any needed support or cooperation.

UCPCOG, in partnership with the City of Wilson and NC Department of Transportation, executed a Complete Streets Workshop on May 7th, 2019. This workshop brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to focus on incorporating Complete Streets, or context-based design, into development and redevelopment within the UCP region. The workshop was an opportunity to share information about the State’s Complete Streets Policy and help decision makers learn how to utilize complete streets in working with transportation agencies to support the policy’s implementation.

GOAL 2: **OBJECTIVE 5:** Incorporate the region’s natural “Green and Blue Infrastructure” assets into development strategies, particularly the area’s primary rivers, the Roanoke and the Tar, as well as nature trails.

**STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:** Promote the regional economic benefits of developing a green infrastructure. Increase collaboration and participation between jurisdictions in both recreational planning and the utilization of heritage tourism associated with the Tar and Roanoke Rivers. Prioritize ways to connect open spaces, watersheds, parks, and other natural areas to maintain quality of life.

The UCPCOG is partnering with NC Conservation Fund and the Collaborative to host a workshop reviewing the nexus of agritourism and recreational tourism opportunities. The workshop was held 5/22/2019 and presented findings from the mapping of both asset categories.

Through a NC Dept. of Environmental Quality grant funded from the US EPA, GIS Stormwater Infrastructure mapping continued for The City of Roanoke Rapids and efforts are expected to continue under a new grant award into 2020.

The Area Agency on Aging participated in the Bike-Ped Plan for Wilson to ensure the aging demographic needs were recognized and considered.

The UCPCOG’s COMPASS (Center on Maintaining Preferred Aging Services & Solutions) non-profit is developing a "Tiny Home" community for underserved older adults. They worked to make sure connection to greenspace and ensuring some greenspace on their pilot “tiny lot” was considered to maintain quality of life for those who participate in this project.
The UCPCOG is assisting the Town of Princeville, Edgecombe County, state and federal agencies on Hurricane Matthew recovery projects and wherever possible, leveraging those efforts. The crux of the recovery is focused on rebuilding a more resilient community. This is an EDA funded effort and partners include NCSU, ECU, FEMA, NCEM, and many others. The project has received continuation funding from EDA with match funds from the State/Town. Recovery efforts include the areas of housing, land use, town hall, school, senior/community center, museum, parks, infrastructure, fire station, and more.

UCPCOG’s PDS staff have a long history of working on small town parks and recreation projects that included the creation of Master Plans and Park and acquiring Park and Recreation Trust Fund grants to build phases of parks. Completed projects during this grants’ life cycle include the Towns of Sims, Scotland Neck, Saratoga, Enfield, and Seaboard. Ongoing projects include the Town of Lucama. Additional projects were developed and submitted for grant funding for the Town of Garysburg, Princeville, and Saratoga (but were not awarded).

PDS continues work with the NC State Clean Energy Technology Center as an Education and Outreach Partner under their Clean Fuels Advanced Technology (CFAT) project to reduce transportation-related air emissions in the nonattainment counties of Edgecombe and Nash. The effort assisted a potential electric vehicle charging station grant in Rocky Mount, a tour of the Cummins Engine Plant near Weldon, and we began work on a public clean vehicles event for the region.

The PDS and Area Agency on Aging Director are members of the Wilson Forward Wellness Collaborative. The group completed a new wellness plan and collaborators have been working to begin meeting the plan’s goals that include efforts in the areas of food, recreation, and other elements of the CEDS.

PDS completed its partnership with the Rural Center to implement a USDA-RD funded Rural Food Business Assistance project that worked in two primary areas: 1) Building local and regional local and healthy food collaboratives, 2) Providing direct technical assistance to businesses and others in the food value chain. The effort helped yield 1 new and 2 emerging food councils, new and expanded programs and markets, a regional social network and web site, support on an organics opportunity economic prospectus, as well as direct assistance to farmers, processors, and others in the food value chain.

The Town of Garysburg is working with the PDS, Northampton Cooperative extension, UNC, NCSU and Resourceful Communities to establish a central kitchen serving early childhood care centers. The old elementary school is the focal point of the effort. The Town of Garysburg has a small legislative appropriation to leverage for USDA RD community facilities funding. The Town is currently seeking quotes for UST removal.

PDS Director continues to serve on the Twin County Just Foods Collaborative Advisory Council, OARS (Organic Agricul-
ture Revitalization Strategy) Advisory Council, and Wilson Food Council Strategic Development Team. Through these efforts, various strategies, action plans, scopes of work, community-based events, and other work is being conducted to improve the local & healthy food scene. This led to a Business of Agriculture Event detailed below and landing the State-wide Food Policy Council Gathering to be held in Rocky Mount in December of 2019. The Area Agency on Aging also sits on the Wilson Food Council and the Twin County Just Foods Advisory Council.

UCPCOG as well as Wilson, Edgecombe and Nash Community College Business Development Centers organized and held the N.E.W. Business of Agriculture Summit November 30, 2018. The day-long event sold out with over 120 participants. It had a luncheon keynote, plenary panels, and breakout sessions on a wide array of topics.

UCPCOG continued to meet with TJCOG and others to discuss and begin early development of “Project 40”, a large regional urban-rural food effort to supply 40% of the fresh food needs in the triangle region by 2040. UCPCOG sees its agricultural assets as being instrumental in making such an effort successful. The PDS Director serves on the Steering Committee.

PDS was recently awarded a grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust for over $200,000 to map the region’s local healthy food asset value chain, with an emphasis on underserved and at-risk communities. The application garnered numerous committed formal partners supporting the need to identify current assets and gaps in the chain in order to more strategically develop new economic and community development opportunities.

**GOAL 3: OBJECTIVE 3:** Most of the region’s downtowns need to attract new businesses, residents and visitors. A few are now gaining momentum with the improved state and national economy, but need more support. **STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:** Revitalize both large and small downtowns throughout the region. Invest in repurposing commercial and residential buildings for emerging economic activities. Ensure that local building codes and code enforcement measures are ensuring safety, while not unnecessarily deterring renovation of downtown buildings.

The Upper Coastal Plain is working with the Town of Enfield to leverage the town center to attract new businesses. Enfield is looking to develop a vacant rail road depot to attract investment by focusing on the town’s agrarian roots. The entire town is an Opportunity Zone.

The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments’ PDS staff assisted the City of Wilson in the environmental review of a Community Development Block Grant for the construction of ten (10) new units of public housing. Additional housing for low and moderate-income residents is sorely needed, as units have aged out and/or been damaged by flooding associated with hurricanes. The CDBG Economic Development Grant was awarded by the North Carolina Department of Commerce to the City of Wilson on June 11, 2018, in the amount of $750,000.00. UCPCOGs work was completed spring of 2019.

UCPCOG facilitates and manages a Regional Brownfields Coalition. Staff worked with partners to apply for an EDA Brownfields Assessment Grant in the amount of $300,000 January 2019. Primary sites named in the grant were located including a large, shuttered industrial building in Roanoke Rapids and a former gas station in the Central Business District of the Town of Littleton. The grant scored a 95% and was not awarded (cut-off was 95.5%). It will be re-submitted in December 2019, with improvements.

UCPCOG continued assisting Town of Princeville with site assessment and land use planning for an annexed 53-acre property desired for future development. Draft plans were drafted summer of 2019 and a “Public Planning for Princeville’s Future Growth” design workshop event was held 8/29/2019 to get input for finalizing details.

Work continued the process of updating the **Town of Spring Hope’s Land Use Plan.** A proposal was submitted for the mapping and digitizing of the Town of Jackson’s Water and Sewer Systems. The process will continue through the 2019 calendar year.
GOAL 3: **OBJECTIVE 4:** Our region has an inadequate supply of new and rehabilitated workforce housing to meet current demand or compete for new residents.

**STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:** Increase workforce housing development through financial incentives for developers. Align economic development, business recruitment, and housing development efforts to ensure attractive and appropriate housing is available for new workers. Preserve historic and period homes and neighborhoods as part of a larger tourism and placemaking strategy.

UCPCOG is providing technical assistance to Princetown and Edgecombe County in the effort to create affordable housing opportunities for the new employees that will be employed in the Kingsboro Industrial Park. Partnerships with private and non-profit development groups are being developed. The area is located in an Opportunity Zone. The COG is also assisting communities in implementing Hazard Mitigation Plan housing strategies for elevation and buyouts in flood prone areas.

Working through UCPCOG non-profit COMPASS (Center on Maintaining Preferred Aging Services & Solutions) to develop a "Tiny Home" community for underserved older adults, the group acquired property and submitted for funding for site preparation. They have engaged the Engineer and have received the preliminary plan. The board should be approving the plan soon and moving forward to clean up the property and meet with city council for necessary approvals. As noted above in Goal 3 – Objective 3 – Item 2, The COG assisted the City of Wilson in completing the environmental review conditions of acceptance for the construction on new low-income housing.

GOAL 4: **Develop Talented and Innovative People**

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Develop, attract, and retain workers with the necessary skills required for today’s, and tomorrow’s jobs.

**STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:** Prepare youth, unemployed and underemployed individuals for high-skill, in-demand jobs. Expand student and worker awareness of career opportunities, their requirements, and the pathways available to attain personal goals. Conduct a regionally coordinated marketing campaign that identifies and promotes middle-skill career opportunities to younger populations.

The Turning Point Workforce Development Board registered 744 unemployed persons from October 2018 through March 2019 and an additional 567 people through September of 2019. Turning Point WDB Business Service Team and regional NCWorks Career Centers continues to assess the needs of our local employers. Collaboration of partners (Community College, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Department of Social Services, etc. strategize to provide solutions such as On-the-Job training, Worker Experience, Incumbent Worker grants and Customize training.

Under the Area agency on Aging Senior Community Service Employment Program a total of 74 senior participants were served in the 5-county region in FY ’17-’18 and 61 in FY ’18-‘19. These seniors are placed with a variety of employers willing to help re-train seniors on-the-job for vacant positions.
As noted above, PDS Director worked with the NC Rural Center to facilitate and coach both Northampton and Halifax County leaders and stakeholders in project development for the GoldenLeaf Foundation’s Community Based Grant making Initiative. The efforts revolved around youth preparedness and workforce development at the educational and community levels. Proposals were submitted and the Halifax proposal was funded and implemented. Community College and other classes have begun with some initial completion certificates issued. A ribbon cutting & launch event with partners was also held.

Under the leadership of the new Executive Director, Robert Hiett, the new initiative with the working title, “Regional Prosperity Initiative”, continued being developed. The concept is, “To develop talented and innovative people for high demand careers in the region through a combination of strategic partnerships, technology solutions, and planning efforts.”

a. See UCPCOG “High Demand Career Initiative” under Goal 1, Objective 3, Item 3 above.

b. See UCPCOG UCP Regional Simulation Partnership under Goal 1, Objective 3, Item 4.

The Turning Point Workforce Development Board registered 67 additional youth participants for appropriate positions during this reporting period.

During the previous period, Turning Point Workforce Development Board issued 12 scholarships to job seekers currently receiving training.

We have three (3) State Certified Career Pathways – Healthcare, Advance Manufacturing and the newest Business Service Support. Business Service Support Career Pathways consist of (1) Business Administration and Support (2) Information Technology and (3) Logistics and Supply Chain Management. For example, Office Administration encompasses clerical staff and office managers, Finance jobs include bookkeepers, accounting technicians and financial officers. Information Technology jobs deal with computers, software, networking and the technical infrastructure of the company. Logistics and Distribution jobs are associated with analyzing, developing and implementing strategic plans that affect production, distribution, and inventory. Metrics are now being gathered to update data that supports these current efforts. Additionally, the Agri-Science Pathway is now being revisited for submittal to the State team for review for certification and local implementation.

UCPCOG continues participating in the Regional Advanced Manufacturing Pipeline – East (RAMP East) initiative that is a regional partnership between Region Q WDB, Turning Point, regional community colleges and economic development partnerships to enhance recruitment efforts in the Advance Manufacturing sector. This is a proactive approach for recruiting underserved populations of the 10 counties building a pipeline of potential candidates for immediate and future advanced manufacturing jobs.
The Turning Point Workforce Development Board conducted 46 Employer Recruitment Events during this reporting period. Turning Point previously participated in several meetings with employers and apprenticeship staff to answer questions and engage interested parties in apprenticeship information. Several expressed interest and an Apprenticeship Consultant has been hired in Pitt County that can assist with the Turning Point Region’s needs as well. No new apprenticeships started between those dates but there is much discussion about it.

Apprenticeship interests continue to grow in the Turning Point Region during this period. A state-assigned Consultant provides technical assistance to both Community College training staff and interested employers through the connection of the Business Engagement Coordinator (Turning Point staff member). There is a pending contract for apprenticeship with a Nash County employer and future contracts in the pipeline awaiting further technical assistance. We hope these contracts will be active in the next few months.

All UCPCOG Directors and the Community Development Manager worked in partnership with the AREA L AHEC organization to consider a regional grant in July 2019 to coordinate and help address the region’s opioid addiction crisis. While it was determined a competitive grant was not feasible before the deadline, it was agreed the two organizations should begin to strategically work together to engage partners more comprehensively addressing the issues.

Turning Point WDB region recently became certified as a WorkReady Community in Edgecombe and Nash County to accompany prior certifications for Halifax and Northampton County. The TP Region continues to offer assistance to Wilson County in their efforts to become Work Ready certified. Staff provides TA for meeting goals such as encouraging employer support and obtaining CRC numbers. Efforts are provided in collaboration with the Community College.

WorkReady Communities:
1. Links workforce development to education
2. Aligns with the economic development needs of communities, regions, and states
3. Matches individuals to jobs based on skill levels

GOAL 4: **OBJECTIVE 3:** Further address human resource development deficits by workforce development.

**STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:** Increase soft skills and life skills instruction in K-12 instruction and workforce development training, utilizing such tools as “Working Smart” and “Career Readiness Certifications”. Leverage health related investments already occurring in the region, i.e. Partnership with Area L AHEC, the intermediary for the Turning Point WDB health awareness and sector training. Philanthropic investment in Healthy Places NC. Encourage older adults in the workforce to utilize services available through the Area Agency on Aging and the aging network.