

Upcoming Events

<https://www.narcog.org/news-meetings-events/meetings-events>

Career and Workforce Expo

DATE: February 11

LOCATION: Decatur, AL

Morgan County Senior Dance

DATE: March 12

LOCATION: Hartselle, AL

Lawrence County Job Fair

DATE: April 29

LOCATION: Moulton, AL

Agency Contacts

Robby Cantrell
Executive Director
rcantrell@narcog.org

Kim Dove
Director of Administration
kdove@narcog.org

Justin Graves
Director of Aging
jgraves@narcog.org

Joey Hester
Director of Planning
jhester@narcog.org

Crystal Julien
Director of Finance
cjulien@narcog.org

Falguni Patel
Director of Transportation
fpatel@narcog.org

ON THE WEB
www.narcog.org

SOCIAL MEDIA
Facebook:
facebook.com/narcogal
LinkedIn:
linkedin.com/company/narcogal/

Foundation Minute

During the recent period of freezing winter weather, the generosity of our community through donations to the NARCOG Foundation made a difference for two individuals in rural Morgan County. Both clients, participants in the NARCOG Home and Community-Based Services program, faced challenges maintaining proper heating in their homes during the below-freezing temperatures.

One client needed propane to fuel their home's heating system, while another faced the risk of losing heat due to an overdue utility bill. Thanks to the support of the NARCOG Foundation, fueled by community contributions, these challenges were resolved. The foundation provided funds to refill the propane tank

for one client and assisted the other with their utility payment, making sure both homes stayed warm and safe during the harsh winter weather.

Your contributions of time and monetary donations to the NARCOG Foundation make it possible to provide timely assistance to those in need. By giving generously, you help improve the lives of vulnerable individuals.

Together, we are making a difference, one act of kindness at a time.



Donate monetarily online at narcog.org/impact/impact-giving



Senior Farmers Market Program

The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is a valuable initiative designed to provide eligible seniors with access to fresh, locally grown produce. This program helps promote healthy eating habits while also supporting local farmers and markets across Alabama.

The SFMNP offers a one-time \$50 benefit to qualified senior participants, allowing them to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, cut herbs, and even locally harvested honey from authorized farmers' markets. The benefit is loaded onto a reloadable card that functions like a debit card, making it easy for seniors to shop at their convenience. The card remains valid until the balance reaches zero, enabling multiple visits to the market.

Participants must use their ben-

efit cards exclusively at farmers' markets; purchases at commercial grocery stores are not permitted.

The Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries (ADAI) plays a vital role in supporting agriculture across the state. This department is responsible for promoting Alabama's farmers, ensuring food safety, and providing agricultural education and resources to the community. ADAI also oversees programs like the SFMNP to encourage local food consumption and strengthen the state's farming economy. Through various initiatives, the department continues to advocate for sustainable agriculture and economic growth in Alabama's rural communities.

The SFMNP is just one example of how the Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries is work-

ing to improve access to fresh, nutritious food while bolstering local farmers and markets. Seniors are encouraged to stay updated on future opportunities and participate in programs that promote health and community well-being.



Robby Cantrell | Executive Director

North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments | PO Box C • 216 Jackson St. SE • Decatur, AL 35602

256-355-4515 | rcantrell@narcog.org



Exciting Events On The Horizon

With the new year underway, NARCOG is gearing up for a packed calendar of events designed to better serve the community. Our organization is committed to making a meaningful impact, from career fairs to celebrations to fraud prevention seminars.

This year, NARCOG has secured spots at three career fairs to help showcase opportunities for the future workforce. These include the Hartselle High School “Finding Your Future” Career Fair, the Decatur-Morgan Chamber of

Commerce’s Career and Workforce Expo, and the Limestone County 2025 Career Fair. One of these events will even include an after-hours job fair, making it more accessible for participants.

Looking ahead to May, NARCOG will host its Annual Older Americans Month Luau on Wednesday, May 14. Open to residents aged 60 and older from Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties, this festive event is a highlight of the year. Stay tuned for more details, and be sure to save the date!

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Coordinator is also planning a Fraud Prevention Seminar to help educate the community about avoiding scams. While details are still being finalized, updates will be shared on our website and social media channels.

NARCOG is always looking for more opportunities to connect with the community. If you know of any events that could benefit from our participation, please don’t hesitate to reach out—we’d love to be involved.

Planning Department Events and Deadlines

January 31, 2025

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grant Deadline

February 4, 2025

ARC - Getting the Grant Workshop in Cartersville, GA

February 7, 2025

Rebuild Alabama Act (RAA) Grant Deadline

February 12, 2025

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant Deadline

February 23, 2025 - February 25, 2025

2025 Tennessee Riverline Summit

March 9, 2025 - March 12, 2025

2025 NADO (National Association of Development Organizations) & DDAA (Development District Association of Appalachian) Washington Conference

Personalized Support Saves Family \$5,600

A recent Aging and Disability Resource Center case highlights the impact of tailored support and resources for individuals navigating healthcare and financial challenges. During a routine screening for services and programs, a client was provided with information and referrals for in-home services to address her immediate needs.

One significant concern she expressed was the financial hardship of affording her husband’s

medications. To explore additional options, she was referred to a prescription assistance program, SenioRx, and the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) was introduced.

To further assist, a Medicare.gov account was created to compare the client’s current drug plan with other available providers. This thorough review identified a new plan that would save the family an astounding \$5,687.33 annually on medication costs. The compar-

ison details were promptly mailed to the client for review and consideration.

This example underscores the importance of personalized support in connecting individuals with the right programs and resources. This process achieved significant financial relief, allowing the family to focus on their well-being without the added burden of unaffordable medication costs.

NARCOG Preparing Nearly \$4M In Grant Submissions

The NARCOG Planning Team is actively preparing 12 grant applications, seeking approximately \$4 million in funding to support various regional projects and initiatives.

Two Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant applications are being finalized, with a submission deadline of January 31st. These include the Buster

Road Realignment project for the Town of Falkville and wastewater treatment plant improvements at Mallard Fox West in Lawrence County. The Lawrence County project includes a \$290,000 ARC funding request, contributing to a total project cost of \$580,000.

Additionally, nine Rebuild Alabama Act (RAA) grant applications are in progress, targeting

road improvement projects in Berlin, Colony, Eva, Falkville, Hartselle, Hillsboro, Holly Pond, North Courtland, and Priceville. These applications are due by February 7th.

Lastly, a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant application will be submitted on behalf of the Town of Priceville by February 12th. This request seeks

\$925,000 in LWCF funding, with a total project cost of \$1,850,000, to acquire land for developing a future park.

By pursuing these grants, NARCOG demonstrates its dedication to advancing infrastructure and fostering community growth across the region.

Supporting Caregivers

Family caregivers are essential in supporting older adults, children, and relatives with disabilities. Recognizing the challenges caregivers face, Alabama CARES offers a variety of services to assist them without replacing their vital role.

Alabama CARES provides caregivers with valuable support to help them in their caregiving journey. Caregivers are given information on local resources available to them, such as in-home care, meal delivery, and transportation services, all tailored to their specific needs. This helps them navigate the complex system of community services, making it easier to find the right support.

Support groups are available for caregivers to connect with others who understand the challenges they face. These groups provide a safe space to share experiences, gain advice, and receive mutual encouragement from peers who are navigating similar caregiving situations.

For caregivers who need more personalized help, short-term case management is offered. This

service assists caregivers in accessing necessary resources, such as financial assistance, home care services, and transportation. The goal is to make it easier for caregivers to find the support they need without added stress.

Alabama CARES also offers respite services, providing caregivers with temporary relief from their daily responsibilities. These services are prioritized for caregivers who are under the greatest strain, allowing them to take much-needed breaks to rest and recharge.

Through counseling and education, Alabama CARES helps caregivers make informed decisions and manage stress more effectively. Educational programs cover various topics, including financial planning, problem-solving, and stress management, all aimed at helping caregivers feel more confident in their roles.

Training is another key aspect of the program. Caregivers can enhance their skills in areas like mobility assistance, medication management, and other essential caregiving techniques. This train-

ing helps improve the safety and quality of care provided, making caregivers more equipped to handle their responsibilities.

Finally, supplemental services are available on a limited basis to further assist caregivers. These services may include medical supplies, home modifications, or other forms of support to complement the care provided by family members.

Alabama CARES also offers Caregivers Connect meetings, where caregivers can come together in a supportive environment to share concerns, exchange stories, and discover helpful resources. These gatherings provide an opportunity to learn from one another and gain emotional support. The dates for these meetings are available on our website under "Meetings and Events."

For more information or assistance, please contact Renae Reynolds at 256-355-4515 or rreynolds@narcog.org. Alabama CARES is committed to supporting caregivers and helping them navigate their caregiving journey with confidence and care.

New Hires



Crys Minter
Case Manager



Hope Griffin
Case Manager



David Bass
Transit Driver



Frank Taylor
Transit Driver

January Anniversaries

Jeffrey Adams
Program Admin Assistant
4 years of service

Heather Lee
Personal Choices Case Manager
4 years of service

Dee Tucker
Program Admin Assistant
5 years of service

Sandra Coleman
Receptionist
12 years of service

Stephanie King
SenioRx Coordinator
17 years of service



Connecting the Decatur Community

At NARCOG, we understand that transportation is more than just getting from one place to another—it's a vital connection to jobs, community resources, medical care, and recreation. Reliable transportation enhances the well-being of our entire community, and NARCOG Transit is here to provide that connection.

Our public transportation ser-

vices are open to individuals of all ages, with handicapped-accessible vehicles available upon request in the City of Decatur.

Enjoy affordable transportation, which operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Rides must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance by calling 256-580-2088.

NARCOG Transit is proudly op-

erated by the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments in partnership with the City of Decatur and the Federal Transit Administration.

Whether it's getting to work, a medical appointment, or a local event, NARCOG Transit is here to help you stay connected.

The North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments, or NARCOG, is your local elected officials and community leaders working together to make your community a better place to live, work, play, and do business. The compassionate team at NARCOG is continuously searching for new ways to positively impact the quality of life for individuals and the vibrancy and livability of communities with the three-county region of Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties.

AGING SERVICES

The Area Agency on Aging is part of a nationwide network of aging services under the direction of the U.S. Administration for Community Living and is funded through the Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS). This partnership with ADSS, working under the authority of the Older Americans Act, is to plan and carry out a comprehensive, coordinated service delivery system to address the needs of people over 60, or persons with disabilities of any age, and help them maintain their independence. Services include:

- In-Home Services
- Prescription Drug Coverage
- Caregiver Support
- Long-Term Care Advocacy
- Senior Legal Assistance
- Senior Employment (55+)
- Food Assistance
- Nutrition Options
- Health Promotion Activities
- Wellness Programs
- Medicare and Medicaid Counseling
- Hospital-to-Home Transitions
- Referral Help and Support Services (any age)
- Fraud Prevention
- Home and Community Based Services

IMPACT GIVING

The NARCOG Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that assists older adults or disabled clients to meet the unmet needs of other programs or services. 100% of the funds or items donated are used for client assistance. The Foundation can help retrofit homes, including wheelchair ramps, steps, handrails, grab bars, purchase AC and heat resources, and provide batteries for a power scooter with monetary donations. Several different types of donations are accepted, including:

- Monetary donations
- Cleaning Supplies
- Personal Hygiene Items
- Canned or Shelf-Stable Food
- Kleenex
- Bath Tissue
- Incontinence Supplies
- Mobility Aids
- Adult Diapers
- Group and Individual Volunteering

PLANNING SERVICES

The NARCOG Planning Department provides community and economic development planning services for our member governments and municipalities. These services support developmental efforts in our three-county region. Services include:

- Comprehensive Planning
- Downtown, Corridor, and Trails Planning
- Grant Technical Assistance and Preparation
- Grant Administration
- Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) - Rural Transportation Planning
- Zoning Ordinances and Maps
- Subdivision Regulations

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The NARCOG Transit Agency operates an urban public transportation system within the Decatur Urban Area. The purpose of this service is to provide mobility opportunities to individuals of all ages and abilities in collaboration with the City of Decatur and the Federal Transit Administration.

- Call 256-580-2088 to schedule a ride at least 24 hours in advance
- Wheelchair-accessible vehicles are available
- Each one-way ride costs \$2
- Connect Cards (prepaid punch cards) can be purchased at the main office or on a transit vehicle for \$20
- Ride Operations are Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 5 PM
- Ride Scheduling is Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 4 PM

BUSINESS LOAN FINANCING

The NARCOG Accelerate Business Growth Fund is a local lending resource to support business start-ups, or expansions that result in job creation, leverage private sector investment, and reduce unemployment in Cullman, Lawrence, or Morgan Counties.

- Traditional or Microloan Funding Options
- Competitive Interest Rates
- Business financing used to purchase or renovate real estate, machinery, equipment, inventory, or working capital
- Business loan requirements must be met for consideration
- Loan amounts from \$10,000 to \$250,000