

Upcoming Events

Caregivers Connect

DATE: November 16 at 10 a.m.

LOCATION: NARCOG Board Room - Decatur

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NARCOG Goes To School

Community outreach is an essential part of establishing any successful organization. North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) takes community engagement seriously. NARCOG often connects with educational institutions and local or state leaders, to share their mission of “positively impacting people and communities.” Whether participating in a career fair for middle school students or inviting state legislators to immerse themselves in educational opportunities, NARCOG continuously strives to be a pillar of the community.

“Agencies like NARCOG have more than 35 different career opportunities. Our work is rewarding, fun, and constantly evolving,” says NARCOG Executive Director Robby Cantrell. “If I had known about career opportunities in local government when I was in high school, my college career would have been drastically different. I want to pass on what I have learned to current students, so they have a better understanding of what a career in local government looks like.”

NARCOG offers a variety of jobs under different departments, such as Aging, Planning, Transit, Finance, and Adminis-

tration. To showcase what jobs are available and to get students interested in local government, NARCOG has been busy participating in career fairs.

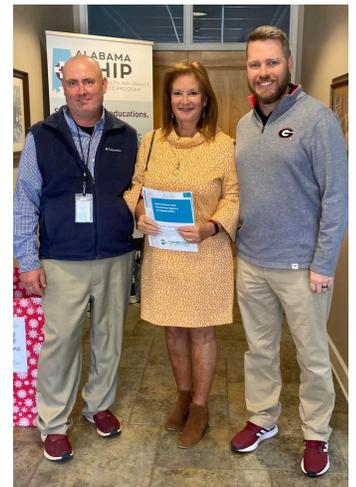
NARCOG was invited to join North Alabama’s World of Works (WOW) Career Fair. WOW is a hands-on, interactive career fair featuring North Alabama’s top employers with over 8,000 middle school students. NARCOG showcased a range of jobs and services offered and connected with many established members of the North Alabama workforce community. The connections made allowed NARCOG to receive an invitation to participate in the Falkville High School Career Fair just a few weeks later.

Most recently, NARCOG joined 80 companies from around Alabama for the Career Showcase: Tools of the Trade held at Wallace State Community College. Over 1,000 8th-grade students attended to see the different career paths offered. Many kids took an interest in the robotic pets, a project to help older adults combat loneliness and social isolation.

Dana Dobson, NARCOG’s Alabama Cares Coordinator, conducted Virtual Dementia Tours in local schools and at the main office in Decatur. The Virtual Dementia Tour is described as

“your window into their world.” Dobson comments, “the tour was a big hit at the Decatur High School, and we were even asked to come back a second day.”

Developed and patented by P.K. Beville, MS., Second Wind Dreams, the Virtual Dementia Tour is implemented by 2,000+ healthcare and educational facilities and has been experienced by millions worldwide. This Dementia simulation experience is evidence-based, with proven results and outcomes. NARCOG hopes to expand this eye-opening educational experience to more students.



Representative Collins visits NARCOG building to participate in the Virtual Dementia Tour.



Robby Cantrell | Executive Director

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Masters Games “Play Day”

Masters Games is back and better than ever! Masters Games of Alabama is a non-profit organization that promotes healthy lifestyles for active adults 50 years of age and older through social, mental, and physical activities. This event happens over a few days during the summer, and generally has anywhere between 600 to 800 seniors participating. Because of COVID-19, Masters Games were unfortunately postponed due to the high contagiousness of the virus. To reintroduce Masters Games and bring Alabama’s seniors back together again, “Play Day” was created.

This event was held on October 19th at Vestavia Hills Parks and Recreation Department and was free to all pre-registered participants 50 years and older. Typically, Masters Games provide awards to top performers, and participants can move on to State Games if they qualify at District Games. In contrast, “Play Day” was about having fun and anyone who participated in at least one game received a medal. This encouraged everyone to play and look forward to Masters Games in the summer. Games at this event included free-throw basketball, nerf and frisbee throw, cornhole, pickleball, dominos, and Rook.

This event was a success, with over 250 seniors from six districts. NARCOG volunteered to assist in setup, gameplay, and breakdown and is excited to see what Masters Games has in store for the Alabama seniors this summer.



NARCOG Attends Annual AARC Conference

North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) had the opportunity to attend the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) Annual Training Conference in Orange Beach. The AARC is a public, non-profit organization representing all municipi-

palities and counties in Alabama through the membership of individual regional councils. There are twelve regional councils within Alabama. Most councils offer aging services or planning and economic development, or both. At the conference, local and state leaders

are given opportunities to share information or ideas and offer informative track-specific work and general sessions. This conference has been a successful initiative in generating regional solutions to local and statewide issues. “The variety of topics that were discussed

at the annual training conference will help our agency as it continues to serve our Region’s residents,” NARCOG Aging Director Justin Graves claims.

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The conference offers three work sessions: Community and Economic Development, Organizational Effectiveness, and "All Things Aging." The Aging category included six sessions with various speakers and topics, ranging from "Managing Isolation of Seniors" to "Inclusive and Equitable Services to Non-Traditional Families in the Aging Field." NARCOG Medicaid Waiver Division Manager Deborah Wilson comments, "the serving non-traditional families training session brought to my attention that several Medicaid Waiver clients do not have adult children taking care of them. Their support comprises non-traditional family members, which can sometimes be limited on how often they can

help. This makes Medicaid services more vital than ever for seniors who wish to remain in their home and the community."

The conference held multiple speakers including Kristin Scrogins from genWHY Communications, Jillian Miles-Massey from HorizonPoint Consulting, Rochelle W. Johnson from Auburn University's Office of Inclusion and Diversity, and more. These speakers all included a unique insight into how individuals can better serve our community by keeping in mind the different needs of everyone based on a variety of factors. NARCOG had 19 members in attendance at the conference.



NARCOG Executive Director Robby Cantrell awarding Speaker Mac McCutcheon with a Public Service Award for Outstanding and Exemplary Commitment to the people of Alabama

NARCOG Saves Seniors Millions



North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) SenioRx and SHIP programs have saved seniors millions in Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan counties in 2022.

SenioRx aids with medications for the uninsured, underinsured, or those who have reached the Medicare Part D coverage gap (donut hole). Individuals interested in SenioRx assistance are screened by counselors to ensure they fit the criteria. Those who meet the requirements will be connected with patient assistance programs

offered through drug manufacturers.

In FY 2022 alone, NARCOG has saved our Region's seniors over 2.5 million dollars in prescription costs with SenioRx.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) offers Medicare and Medicaid counseling services for those eligible through age or disability. NARCOG assists individuals by helping them understand their choices and by assisting them in applying for benefits. Many individuals are not aware that there are programs that will help pay the

Medicare Part B premium as well as assist with co-pays and prescription drug benefits. NARCOG's SHIP counselors can screen individuals for these programs and help them apply.

From April 2021 to March 2022, NARCOG saved seniors in Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan counties over 1.2 million dollars in premiums and co-payments through SHIP.

Together, these program have saved the Region's seniors over 3.5 million dollars.

Spreading Holiday Cheer For All To Hear

North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) has kicked off its Annual Holiday Drive! This holiday season NARCOG has the privilege of gifting over 400 homebound seniors in Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan counties. This year, blankets and monetary donations are being accepted.

NARCOG's holiday drive has only been live for a few weeks and has already received a great deal of support from the community.

"NARCOG has only been collecting blankets since mid-October, and we have already received many blankets from generous people in our community. I am constant-

ly getting emails from individuals stating they will share our information with their church or partner with their school to help us reach our goal. I cannot express my gratitude for this community, as none of it would be possible without their help," NARCOG Outreach Coordinator Kylie Bolyard said. Donations

are due at the end of November to allow Case Managers to take gift bags to seniors at the beginning of December. Blanket donations can be dropped off at the NARCOG office in Decatur and monetary donations can be made on the website at <https://www.narco.org/impact/impact-giving>.