MINUTES
BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PRE-AGENDA MEETING

The Burke County Board of Commissioners held a pre-agenda meeting on Monday, April 6, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, Burke County Services Building, 110 N. Green Street, Entrance E, in Morganton, North Carolina. The meeting was streamed live on the County's YouTube channel, BurkeCountyNC, and it was broadcast on the local cable systems. The agenda, in its entirety, was posted to the County's website, www.burkenc.org, several days prior to the meeting. Pursuant to Resolution No. 2024-17, adopted and effective on August 20, 2024, the Burke County Board of Commissioners conferred upon itself all the power, duties, and responsibilities of the Board of Health and the Social Services Board. Those present were:

COMMISSIONERS:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman Phil Smith, Vice Chairman Brian Barrier Mike Stroud
COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:	Randy Burns (present for the preceding special meeting but was absent from the pre-agenda meeting due to a prior engagement.)
STAFF:	Brian Epley, County Manager Margaret Pierce, Finance Director/Deputy County Manager Dylan Laws, Wilson, Lackey, Rohr & Hall P.C. Katherine "Kat" Wright, Interim Clerk to the Board

CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Brittain called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and extended condolences to the family of Waits W. Gordon, Jr. on his recent passing.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Motion: To approve the agenda as amended: moving Decision Item No. 5, *HR - Personnel Policy Updates*, to the Consent Agenda.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, and Mike Stroud
ABSENT:	Randy Burns

PRESENTATIONS

GA - PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING APRIL 2026 AS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH
Amy Kincaid, Guardian ad Litem, requested the approval of a proclamation designating April 2026 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Burke County, North Carolina.
The proclamation urges all Burke County residents to take part in efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect by supporting families and strengthening community partnerships. By recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, Burke County reaffirms its dedication to creating a safer and healthier future.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was

moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CD - RECOGNITION OF JAINNY ESTRADA, NCSSM'S ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES
Brian Epley, County Manager, requested recognition of Jainny Estrada, Assistant Director of Student Services, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, who leads and coordinates an impactful day of student volunteerism at their regular meeting.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

EMS - RECOGNITION OF LIFE SAVERS
James Robinson, Emergency Services Director, requested that the Board recognize several Emergency Services staff members for their exemplary lifesaving actions during recent emergency incidents at their regular meeting. These dedicated individuals responded swiftly and skillfully to critical situations, providing essential medical care that resulted in positive outcomes for patients in urgent need.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS

CD — CONSIDERATION TO AMEND ARTICLE 8, ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT, OF THE BURKE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE & PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:00 P.M.
Patrick Dickinson, Planner, presented a zoning amendment request to amend Article 8 (Administration and Enforcement) of the Burke County Zoning Ordinance. This amendment modifies the membership structures and defined duties for both the Board of Adjustment (BOA) and the Planning Board. The primary intent is to codify current procedures and to streamline board operations by ensuring all appointed members can participate.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CONSENT AGENDA

BOC - PROCLAMATION DECLARING MAY 7, 2026, AS NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
Chairman Brittain requested approval of a proclamation recognizing the National Day of Prayer.

The theme for the 2026 National Day of Prayer is: "Glorify God Among the Nations - Seeking Him in All Generations."

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CLERK - REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE CHILD PROTECTION & CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION TEAM
Kat Wright, Interim Clerk to the Board, reported that the terms of appointment end on April 30, 2026, for the following CPCFPT members:

- Seat No. 3, Law Enforcement - Sheriff Hinceman
- Seat No. 12, EMS or Fire Fighter - James Robinson, ES Director

Both members are interested in serving another term, and the terms are for three (3) years.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CLERK - APPOINTMENT TO THE TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (TCC)
Kat Wright, Interim Clerk to the Board, explained that due to the retirement of Alan Glines, his removal from the TCC was requested. Linwood "Patrick" Dickinson is the recommended replacement to serve on this committee.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CLERK - APPOINTMENT TO THE COUNCIL ON AGING
Kat Wright, Interim Clerk to the Board, requested the appointment of Phyllis Bruenger to fill vacant Seat No. 8 on the Council on Aging to complete an unexpired term ending November 30, 2028.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved to the following meeting without objection.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - RESOLUTION CREATING THE BURKE COUNTY VETERANS SERVICES BOARD & BYLAWS
Brian Epley, County Manager, presented a request for approval of a resolution establishing the Burke County Veterans Services Board (VSB) and adopting the associated bylaws. He explained

that, at the request of Vice Chairman Smith, staff reviewed the existing VSB and met with committee members regarding opportunities for increased engagement and support of veterans' services. Staff found that the committee historically met primarily to plan Memorial Day and Veterans Day events and lacked formal officers, bylaws, and a clearly defined structure.

Mr. Epley noted that historical Board minutes indicate a veterans advisory committee existed prior to the mid-1970s; however, official records documenting its creation and organization are no longer available. The proposed resolution would formally establish the Veterans Services Board, maintain the existing membership and terms, define its advisory role, provide for officers and regular meetings, and adopt the bylaws governing its organization and operations.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Stroud expressed support for the proposed changes to the Veterans Services Board and noted the importance of increasing engagement and support opportunities for veterans in the community. In response, Mr. Epley stated that Burke County is home to approximately 4,500 veterans and that existing advisory board members have expressed interest in becoming more organized, strategic, and engaged, particularly in reaching younger veterans transitioning from active-duty service. He stated that the proposed board structure would help achieve those goals. There being nothing further, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 20 - $110,854

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 20, which recognizes additional funds from NC DHHS for the post-Helene disaster recovery plan. This is a continuation of a partial funding plan under AA 122 and is multi-year funding.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 20			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-50003-01-439500-	Health AA Funding	$110,854	
EXPENSES			
100-50003-20-569122-	Health AA 122	$110,854	
Purpose: To recognize funds under AA 122 for the electronic scanning and long-term retention of medical records, as required by law, and to enhance record protection against potential damage from events such as Tropical Storm Helene.			

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 21 - $550,000

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 21, which recognizes additional funds from NC DEQ for sewer flow meter purchase and installation.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 21			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
210-21004-01-433101-	DEQ Funds	$550,000	
EXPENSES			
210-21004-60-571400-	Professional Services	$17,461	
210-21004-60-575000-	Sewer Flow Meters	$532,539	
Purpose: To recognize funds from NC DEQ to purchase sewer flow meters to better track volume passing through critical sewer infrastructure.			

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved to the following meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 22 - $275,000

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 22, which recognizes additional funds from other government agencies paid to Burke County for housing inmates. The daily reimbursement rate includes food costs.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 22			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-46001-02-434220-	Prisoner Reimbursements	$275,000	
EXPENSES			
100-46001-010-562600-	Food Costs	$275,000	
Purpose: To recognize funds from other governments for inmate housing costs.			

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved to the following meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 23 - $195,339

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 23, which recognizes additional Tropical Storm Helene disaster recovery allocations from NC DHHS to the Department of Social Services.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 23			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-52000-01-433441-	DSS Administrative Funds	$195,339	
EXPENSES			
100-52050-20-554000-	SAA/SAD Disaster Assistance	$75,593	
100-52070-20-554000-	Disaster Assistance Funds	$119,746	
Purpose: To recognize $195,339 in additional funds from NC DHHS for Tropical Storm Helene disaster assistance for adults within the Department of Social Services. No County funds are required.			

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 24 - $50,000

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 24, which recognizes additional NC Foster Care Independence Program (LINKS) allocations from NC DHHS to the Department of Social Services. The LINKS program is designed to help young adults who have experienced foster care successfully transition to adulthood. It provides support and resources to youth for educational and life planning success.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 24			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-52000-01-433440-	LINKS Funds	$50,000	
EXPENSES			
100-52070-20-554000-	LINKS Costs	$50,000	
Purpose: To recognize $50,000 in additional NC DHHS funding for the Foster Care Independence Program (LINKS) to support youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood. No County funds are required.			

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 25 - $232,656

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 25, which recognizes additional special adoption promotion program funds from NC DHHS to the

Department of Social Services. These funds are required to be used for expenses directly related to advertising, promoting, and funding specific adoption costs.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 25			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-52060-01-434615-	Special Adoption Promotion Funds	$232,656	
EXPENSES			
100-52060-20-561500-	Special Adoption Promotion	$232,656	
Purpose: To recognize $232,656 in additional NC DHHS funding for the Special Adoption Promotion Program to support adoption-related advertising, promotion, and associated costs. No County funds are required.			

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 26 - $1,086,095

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 26, which recognizes additional estimated costs for foster care board payments and related expenses. Reimbursements from NC DHHS to the Department of Social Services are also estimated for a portion of the board payments that are eligible expenses. The balance of the costs is the County portion of the estimated board payments and other costs. These are requested as a fund balance appropriation.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 26			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-52000-01-433441-	DSS Administrative Funds	$545,763	
100-00000-09-439900-	Fund Balance Appropriation	$540,332	
EXPENSES			
100-52070-20-554001-	IV-E Foster Care Board Payments	$402,605	
100-52070-20-554006-	County Foster Care Expense	$113,910	
100-52070-20-554011-	State Foster Care Board Payments	$569,580	
Purpose: To allocate estimated expenses for foster care costs and estimated partial reimbursements from NC DHHS, with the balance from the General Fund, fund balance.			

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 27 - $196,700

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 27, which recognizes estimated fire taxes to be collected and remitted to various fire departments.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 27			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
153-15301-00-431175-	Lake James Fire	$22,000	
153-15302-00-431175-	West End Fire	$15,000	
153-15303-00-431175-	Brendleton Fire	$20,000	
153-15304-00-431175-	Chesterfield Fire	$14,000	
153-15305-00-431175-	George Hildebran Fire	$14,000	
153-15307-00-431175-	Icard Fire	$18,000	
153-15308-00-431175-	Triple Community Fire	$28,000	
153-15309-00-431175-	Lovelady Fire	$47,000	
153-15311-00-431175-	Oak Hill Fire	$2,700	
153-15313-00-431175-	Enola Fire	$2,500	
153-15314-00-431175-	Drowning Creek Fire	$4,300	
153-15320-00-431175-	Longtown Fire	$7,200	
153-15321-00-431175-	Smokey Creek-North Catawba	$2,000	
EXPENSES			
153-15301-00-548000-	Lake James Fire	$22,000	
153-15302-00-548000-	West End Fire	$15,000	
153-15303-00-548000-	Brendleton Fire	$20,000	
153-15304-00-548000-	Chesterfield Fire	$14,000	
153-15305-00-548000-	George Hildebran Fire	$14,000	
153-15307-00-548000-	Icard Fire	$18,000	
153-15308-00-548000-	Triple Community Fire	$28,000	
153-15309-00-548000-	Lovelady Fire	$47,000	
153-15311-00-548000-	Oak Hill Fire	$2,700	
153-15313-00-548000-	Enola Fire	$2,500	
153-15314-00-548000-	Drowning Creek Fire	$4,300	
153-15320-00-548000-	Longtown Fire	$7,200	
153-15321-00-548000-	Smokey Creek-North Catawba	$2,000	
Purpose: To recognize $196,700 in estimated fire tax revenues to be collected and remitted to various fire departments. No County funds are required.			

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 28 - $425,000 (NET ZERO IMPACT)

Brian Epley, County Manager, requested approval of Budget Amendment No. 28, which recognizes transferring earmarked funds for Western Piedmont Community College for future capital needs.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 28			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
221-58500-11-439221-	Transfer from General Fund	$425,000	
EXPENSES			
100-58500-30-590050-	WPCC Capital Needs		$425,000
100-59000-55-595221-	Transfer to Fund 221-WPCC	$425,000	
221-58500-30-599999-	WPCC Capital Set Aside	$425,000	
Purpose: To transfer earmarked funds for Western Piedmont Community College for future capital needs.			

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.

FINANCE – PUBLIC SCHOOL CAPITAL FUND APPLICATIONS & BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 29 ($870,494; NET ZERO IMPACT)

Margaret Pierce, Finance Director / Deputy County Manager, reported that a portion of lottery proceeds is deposited into the Public-School Building Repair and Renovation Fund, administered by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, to support school capital needs. In order to access these funds, both the Board of County Commissioners and the Board of Education must approve and submit applications for eligible projects.

Burke County Public Schools has submitted applications totaling $382,257.97 for 27 eligible repair and renovation projects. These projects meet program guidelines and have been reviewed with NC DPI staff. Ms. Pierce stated that applications for an additional 21 eligible repair and renovation projects are expected to be presented to the Board at a future date.

Additionally, approval of Budget Amendment No. 29 was requested to transfer $870,494 in existing School Capital Fund set-aside dollars to the Burke County Public Schools Central Office Renovation Fund. These funds will support the Central Office Renovation Project, which has a total project budget of $10,870,494.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 29			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
222-00000-11-439150-	Transfer from Fd 150-School Cap	$870,494	
EXPENSES			
150-00000-30-599999-	BCPS Set Aside Capital		$870,494
150-00000-55-595222-	Transfer to BCPS Central Office Fd	$870,494	

222-00000-30-590050	Central Office Building Renovation	$870,494	
Purpose: To transfer $870,494 in existing School Capital Fund set-aside dollars to the Burke County Public Schools Central Office Renovation Fund. No County funds are required.			

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Ms. Pierce responded to a clarifying question. There being no further discussion, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

FINANCE - PROPERTY SURPLUS SALES (RESERVE REQUIREMENTS MET)

Margaret Pierce, Finance Director / Deputy county Manager reported that at the February 16, 2026 meeting, the Board of Commissioners declined the high bids received for three (3) properties—REID# 12638 (Rockyford Street), REID# 38040 (Kirksey Drive), and REID# 38041 (Kirksey Drive)—as the bids did not meet the established reserve amounts and directed staff to repost the properties for sale with the same reserve requirements. Following the rebid process through GovDeals, only one (1) property met the established reserve amount: REID# 12638 (Rockyford Street, 0.92 acres). This was a request to approve the property sale.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

FINANCE - USDA LEASE RENEWAL

Margaret Pierce, Finance Director / Deputy County Manager, reported that the United States Department of Agriculture's lease is set to expire. She requested authority to renew the lease as permitted under N.C.G.S. § 160A-274, at a rate of $25.00 per square foot, for a total annual rent in the amount of $67,775.00, for a five-year term from January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2031.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Ms. Pierce responded to a clarifying question from Commissioner Stroud. There being no further discussion, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

HEALTH - PROCLAMATION FOR NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

Samantha Simmons, Public Health Educator, requested approval of a proclamation declaring April 6-12, 2026, as National Public Health Week. The theme for 2026 is "It Starts Here."

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

OR — RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF THE REMNANT DEFENDANTS NATIONAL OPIOID SETTLEMENT PARTICIPATION DOCUMENTS

Brandi Greer, Opioid Response Deputy Director, reported that Burke County has received notice of a new national opioid settlement involving six (6) regional pharmaceutical distributors and dispensing entities: Associated Pharmacies, Inc. (and American Associated Pharmacies); J M Smith Corporation; Louisiana Wholesale Drug Company, Inc.; Morris and Dickson Co.; North Carolina Mutual Wholesale Drug Company, Inc.; and United Natural Foods, Inc. (including subsidiaries SuperValu and Advantage Logistics). This agreement is referred to as the Remnant Defendants Settlement.

Under the terms of the settlement, Burke County must formally opt-in to participate by executing a Combined Subdivision Participation and Release Form. Participation allows the County to receive its share of settlement funds distributed under the agreement and ensures continued alignment with North Carolina's statewide opioid settlement framework.

The deadline for eligible entities to return the participation form is May 4, 2026. Approval of the attached resolution authorizes the appropriate county official to execute the required participation documents on behalf of Burke County.

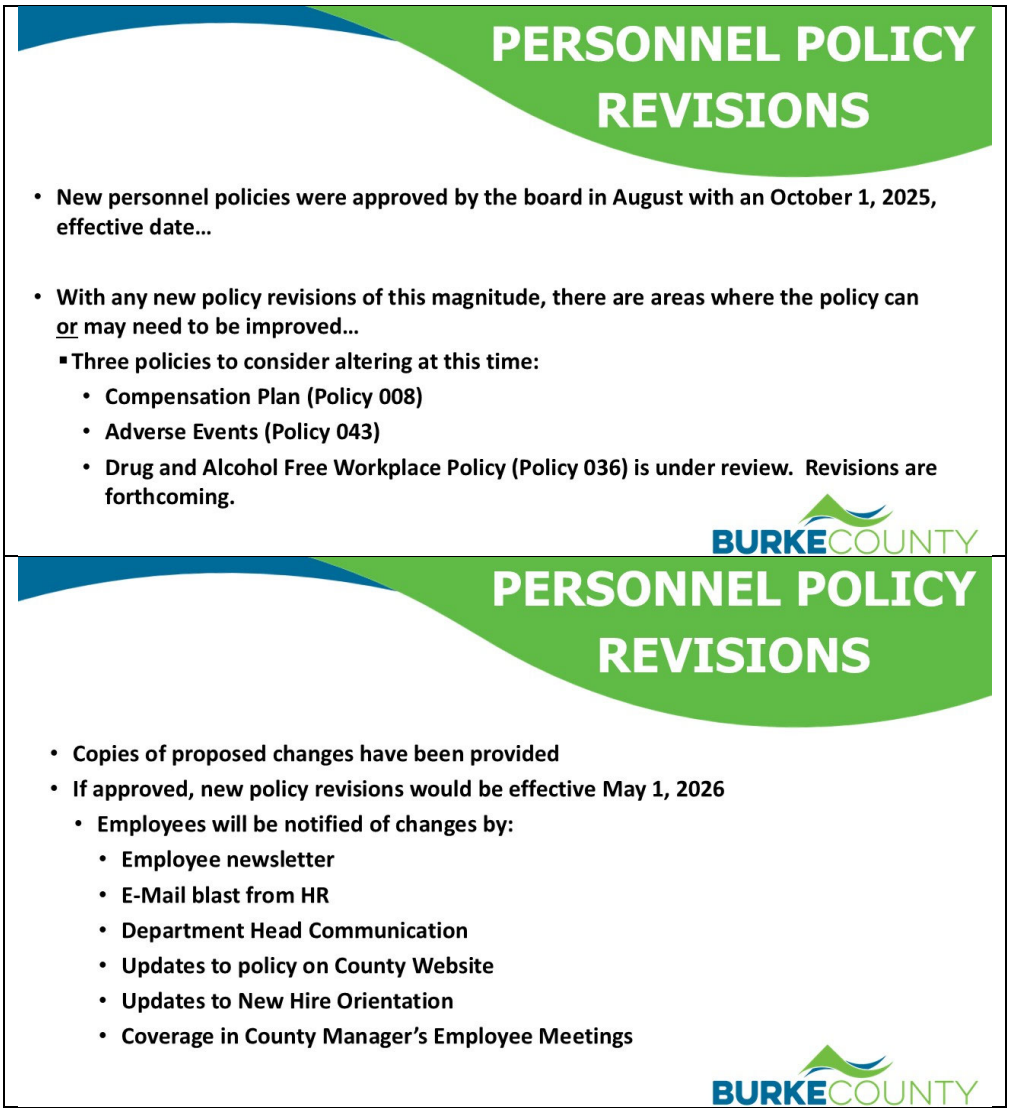
Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

HR - PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES (PLACE HOLDER)

Mark Miller, Human Resources Director, presented proposed revisions to the Compensation Plan (Policy 008), Adverse Events (Policy 043), and Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace (Policy 036). The complete proposed policy changes are hereby incorporated into the meeting minutes by reference. Highlights of the PowerPoint presentation were as follows:





Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

ITEMS FOR DECISION

CLERK - APPOINTMENTS / REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE AMERICA 250 COMMITTEE (PLACE HOLDER)

Kat Wirght, Interim Clerk to the Board, reported that the terms of appointment ended April 16th for the following members of the America 250 NC Committee:

- Seat No. 2, Butch McSwain, Morganton City Council
- Seat No. 5, Waits Gordon, History Museum
- Seat No. 8, Deborah Jones, Burke Arts Council
- Seat No. 11, Bryant Lindsey, OVNCST

- Seat No.14, Leslie McKesson

Seat No. 14 is an at-large seat, and there are several applications on file.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - APPROVAL OF INTERLOCAL DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (PLACE HOLDER)
Brian Epley, County Manager, provided a preliminary overview of an interlocal development agreement regarding the use of state housing inducement funds. He explained that the General Assembly allocated approximately $3.2 million to Burke County for housing-related infrastructure improvements and that the County is considering a grant of approximately $400,000 to assist with the construction of a sewer lift station serving a proposed residential development of approximately 140 homes. Mr. Epley stated that the proposed agreement remains under review by the County Attorney's Office and staff and would include performance measures and repayment provisions should the anticipated housing development not occur.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

CM - APPROVAL OF ENGINEERING SERVICES CONTRACT FOR THE LANDFILL
Brian Epley, County Manager, explained that during the Board of Commissioners' November 3, 2026, pre-agenda meeting, the Board approved a temporary contract between Burke County and Garrett & Moore Engineering in the amount of $81,580 for landfill engineering services. This was a request to approve the full annual contract.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

FINANCE - PROPERTY SURPLUS SALES (RESERVE REQUIREMENTS NOT MET)
Margaret Pierce, Finance Director / Deputy County Manager, reported that at the February 16, 2026 meeting, the Board of Commissioners declined the high bids received for three (3) properties—REID# 12638 (Rockyford Street), REID# 38040 (Kirksey Drive), and REID# 38041 (Kirksey Drive)—as the bids did not meet the established reserve amounts, and directed staff to repost the properties for sale with the same reserve requirements. Following the rebid process through GovDeals, two (2) properties did not meet the established reserve amounts.

REID#	ADDRESS	ACRES	RESERVE	HIGH BID	VS. RESERVE

38040	Kirksey Drive	1.01	$22,500	$18,000	$ -4,500
38041	Kirksey Drive	1.47	$22,500	$17,800	$ -4,700

For these properties, the Board can (1) decline the high bids and re-post the properties with the same reserve amounts, (2) decline the high bids and repost with revised reserve amounts, (3) accept the high bids as received, or (4) take any other lawful direction regarding the disposition of the properties. Board direction was requested.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

TAX - TAX COLLECTION REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING MARCH 31, 2026 (PLACE HOLDER)
John Bridgers, Tax Administrator, will present the Tax Collection Report for the period ending March 31, 2026, at the regular meeting.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

TAX - TAX RELEASE AND REFUND REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING MARCH 31, 2026 (PLACE HOLDER)
John Bridgers, Tax Administrator, will present the Release and Refund Report for the period ending March 31, 2026, at the regular meeting.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was moved without objection to the next meeting.

RESULT:	**MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2026, AT 6:00 P.M.**

REPORTS AND COMMENTS
Chairman Brittain requested that Board members submit their reports to the Interim Clerk for inclusion in the regular meeting agenda packet. He reminded attendees of upcoming community events and Board of Commissioners meetings. Chairman Brittain also invited youth groups to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at future meetings and encouraged faith leaders to contact the Clerk's Office if interested in delivering an invocation.

OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS

NCACC - NC COUNTIES CARE FORUM ON RURAL HEALTH CARE VIDEO UPDATE

The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) has provided a brief video message from NCACC President Wallace Nelson with several updates, which can be viewed here: https://vimeo.com/1174907563/0f09581ed0.

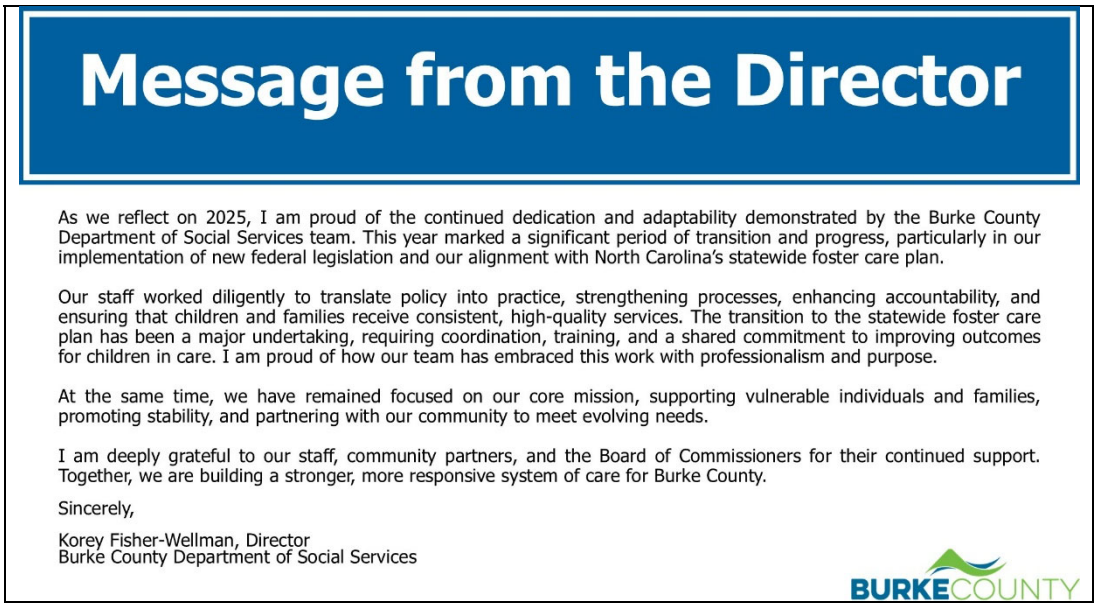
RESULT: NO ACTION TAKEN.

ACTION ITEMS

DSS – 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Korey Fisher-Wellman, DSS Director, Amanda Grady, Assistant Social Services Director, and Chazlyn Thomas, Deputy DSS Director, presented the DSS annual operational report as follows:





DSS by the Numbers

199 full-time employees
10 part-time employees
10 PRN staff

427
fishing license waivers issued in 2025

164 voter registration applications submitted to the County Board of Elections in 2025

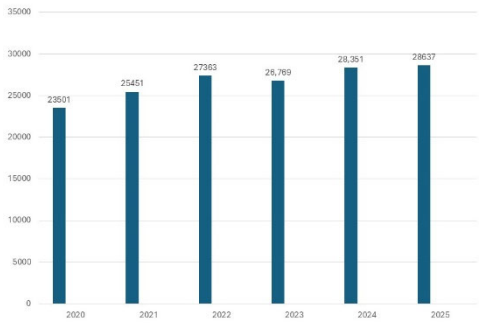
8,567 Medicaid transportation trip referrals in 2025

Medicaid provides health care coverage for people with low incomes. There are programs for children, pregnant women, adults and people who are blind or with disabilities. Through Medicaid Expansion, people ages 19 through 64 may receive health care coverage.

Updates in 2025

- Approximately 400 Medicaid applications are taken each month.
- Approximately 2000 Medicaid re-certifications are normally completed monthly,
- Workers had to learn new policy as it pertained to Foster Care. (CFSP)
- County Department of Social Services continues receive 75% federal reimbursement for the administration of Medicaid eligibility functions.
- A Medicaid Caseworker is designated to continues to offer services at Blue Ridge Health Care.
- The County is subject to numerous audits including the PERM-Payment error rate measurement, MEQC- Medicaid Eligibility Quality Control, County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CPA conducts the case audits), Statewide Single Audit, and Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit (REDA). Errors can result in paybacks to the county.
- 35% of Burke County receive some type of Medicaid.

Active Medicaid Participants



Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)

Food and Nutrition Services is a federal food assistance program that provides low-income families the ability to purchase food they need for a nutritionally adequate diet. Benefits are issued via Electronic Benefit Transfer cards (EBT cards).

Households with school age children who received free or reduced lunch are given additional supplements. Sun-bucks are sent out in the summer. Although the applications are taken through the schools, DSS manages the card distribution.

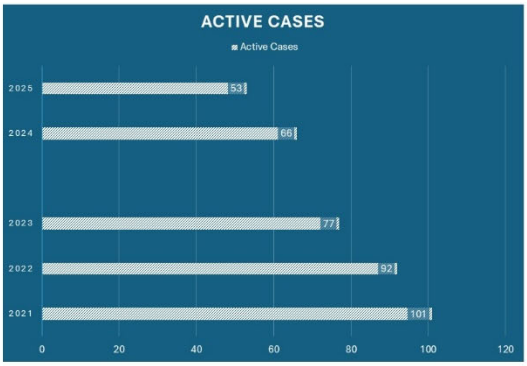
Food and Nutrition Services are an important public-private partnership that helps families afford a basic diet, generates business for retailers, and boosts local economies. Participants purchase groceries with FNS benefits from superstores to farmers markets. Because most households redeem their monthly benefits quickly and because the program helps struggling households purchase adequate food, FNS is one of the most effective forms of local economic support for our community.



YEAR	BENEFITS	PARTICIPANTS
2018	$15,257,818	12,467
2019	$12,979,179	10,397
2020	$28,071,332	12,456
2021	$37,394,876	14,146
2022	$39,812,325	13,403
2023	$27,732,339	11,863
2024	$24,640,383	12,193
2025	$21,937,285	10269



WORK FIRST CASH ASSISTANCE & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



- North Carolina's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, called **Work First**, is based on the premise that parents have a responsibility to support themselves and their children. Through Work First, parents can get short-term training and other services to help them become employed and self-sufficient, but the responsibility is theirs. Most families have two years to move off Work First assistance. Work First provides a monthly check and Medicaid. Applicants must have a related child under the age of 18 living in the home and be a U.S. citizen or legal alien. The resource limit is $3,000.00.

Work First Recipients are required to participate in work activities such as employment, job search and volunteering to obtain work experience.

The Employment Services case workers have constant contact with the participants to assist in eliminating barriers to finding employment. They arrange transportation, day care services, and enroll the participants in classes such as GED or Human Resource Development.

This unit averaged 75 contacts with recipients monthly, which includes, phone calls and office visits. Policy requires case managers have contact with Employment Services recipients every 4 weeks to complete an updated Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA).

Telephonic signatures can be taken at application , however the recertification has to be in person.

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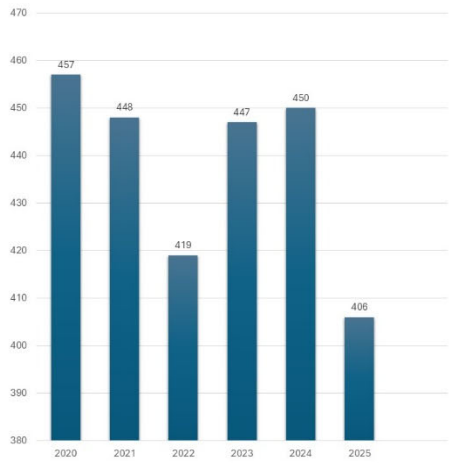
ENERGY PROGRAMS

The **Crisis Intervention Program**, also known as CIP is designed to assist families with heating or cooling emergencies by paying utility bills or deposits and buying oil or wood. Funds can also be used to pay for temporary shelter, home repairs, and purchases of air conditioners, up to $600.00 a fiscal year. Eligibility is based on income, citizenship and the existence of a heating and cooling crisis. Total Number of CIP Applications processed 01/1/2025-12/31/2025 was 1994.

The **Low-Income Energy Assistance Program**, also known as LIEAP, provides a one-time vendor payment to help eligible families pay their heating costs. This program is 100% funded by the Federal Government. Applications are taken from December through March, or until funds are exhausted. Applicants must meet vulnerability, income, resource, and citizenship requirements. Payments are made directly to the vendor. Total Number of LIEAP Applications processed 01/1/2025- 12/31/2025 was 1450.



CHILD CARE SUBSIDY (HELP PAYING FOR CHILD CARE)



- Families may be eligible to receive childcare assistance if:
- Working or attempting to find work
- In school or in a job training program
- Child is receiving child protective services
- Child needs care to support child welfare services or if your family is experiencing a crisis
- Child has developmental needs
- There are 406 cases in Burke County, serving 432 children.

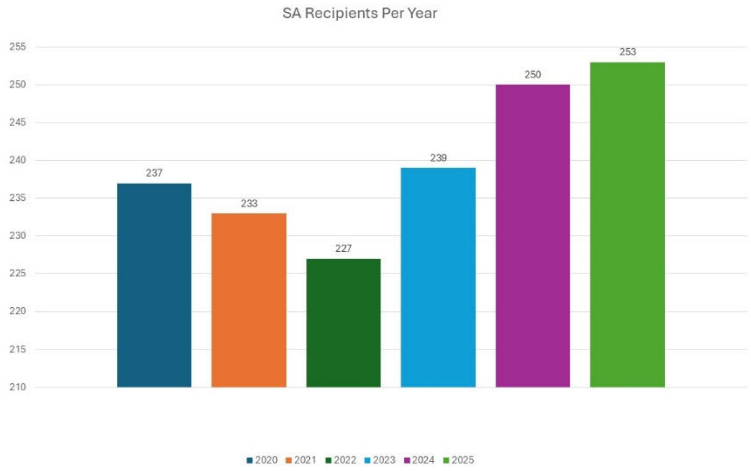
July 2024- June 2025

Total Allocations $3,371,720



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SPECIAL ASSISTANCE



State/County **Special Assistance (SA)** is a state supplement that pays cash benefits to eligible recipients who reside in licensed facilities authorized to receive SA payments.

The Special Assistance In-Home (SA/IH) program provides low-income, North Carolina residents who are eligible for Medicaid with a monthly cash benefit to help them remain living in their homes. The SA payment is funded by 50% county dollars and 50% state dollars.

SA payments are now issued electronically through NCFAST to a bank account chosen by the recipient and/or facility.



CHILD SUPPORT



▶**Child Support Services** provides for the establishment and enforcement of voluntary and court-ordered support obligations (financial and/or health insurance coverage) owed by absent parents for the care of their children. During the past fiscal year, Veritas Child Support staff collected a total of $3,956,281.70



Burke County contracts with Veritas to provide Child Support Services. The partnership started as of February 2020.

→ As of June 2025, the Child Support Case count was 2220.

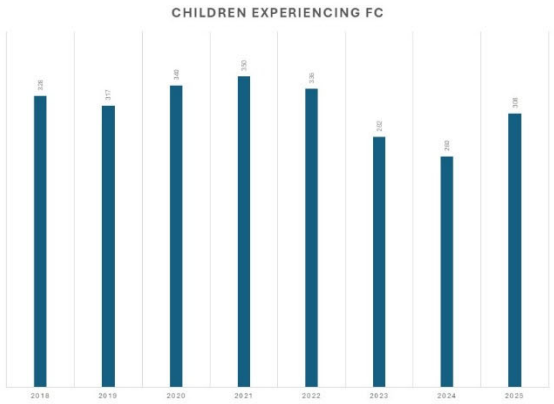
→ By the end of the year Burke's performance improvements had moved the County's overall ranking to 51st place statewide.

→ State Representative, Veritas Office Manager, Veritas Executive Vice President and Program Administrator meet monthly to go over all the performance measures and discuss any concerns.

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PERMANENCY PLANNING

Permanency Planning (Foster care) services are provided to children who must be separated from their parents/caretakers.



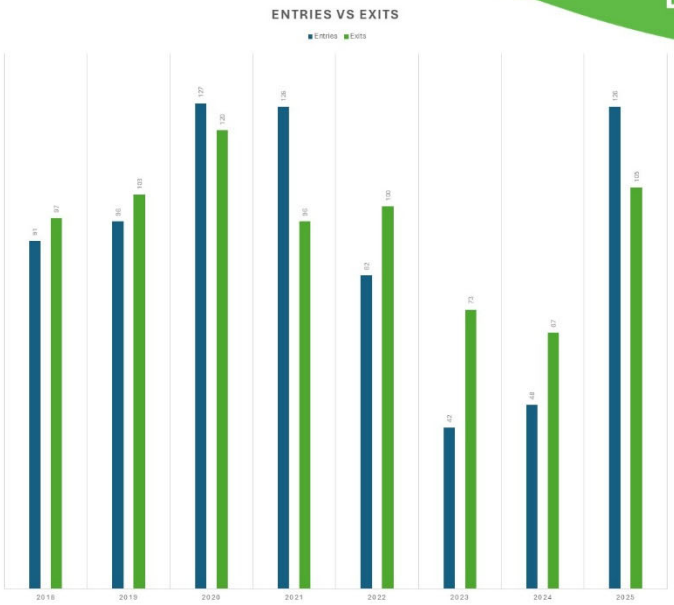
In 2025, 308 children in Burke County experienced Foster care.

Permanency for these children can be achieved through one of the following options:

- ❑Reunification
- ❑Custody
- ❑Guardianship
- ❑Adoption



ENTERING VS EXITING CUSTODY

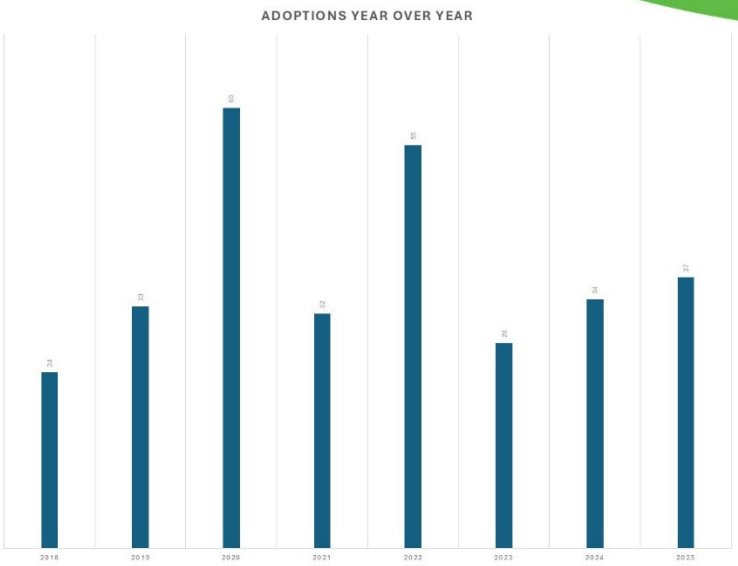


Entering Custody vs Exiting Custody

In 2025,126 children entered the Department's custody, while 105 children exited the Department's custody and achieved some level of permanency.

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ADOPTIONS



"Adoption is the method provided by law to establish the legal relationship of parent and child **between persons who are not so related by birth, with the same mutual rights and obligations** that exist between children and their birth parent.

In 2025, Burke County assisted 37 children in reaching their goal of adoption.

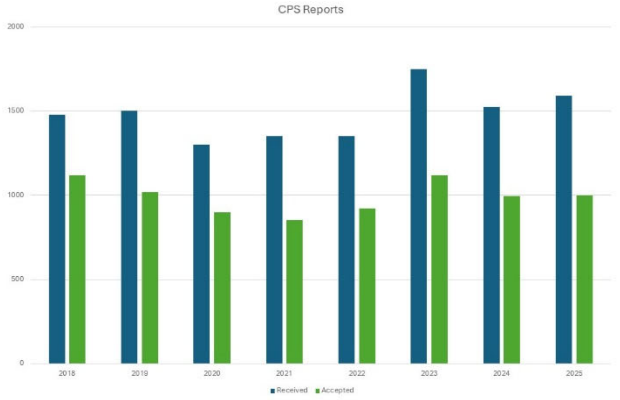


CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Child Protective Services (CPS)
Mandated Services to Protect Children and Support Families

Purpose of CPS:
•Legally mandated, non-voluntary services for families.
•Specializes in maltreated children (abused, neglected, dependent) and those at imminent risk of harm.
•Aims to protect children and improve the abilities of parents/caregivers.

Key Responsibilities of CPS
1.Receiving & Documenting Reports:
•Screen and assess reports of child abuse, neglect, and dependency.
•Two-level decision-making process for allegations.
2.Investigations & Family Assessments:
•Conduct thorough investigations and assess family dynamics.
3.In-home Case Management & Support:
•Provide intensive services to remedy safety issues and support children in their home or temporary placement.
4.Coordinating Community & Agency Services:
•Monitor and coordinate services from community partners and agencies.
5.Court Involvement:
•Petition the court for child removal or continued intervention if safety concerns persist.



- In 2025, Burke County DSS received 1,589 reports of alleged child abuse, neglect, and dependency. The agency accepted 999 of these reports for investigations and assessments as the information provided to the agency met the statutory definitions of child abuse, neglect, or dependency.

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CPS IN-HOME SERVICES

CPS In-Home Services
Supporting Families and Child Safety

Primary Goal:

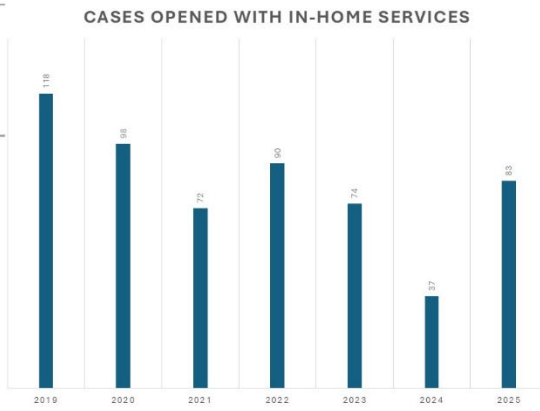
- Support families in maintaining children in their home.
- Eliminate safety concerns and reduce the risk of future maltreatment.
- Achieved through family engagement, support systems, and service providers.

Key Objectives:

- **Address Child Safety & Protection**
- **Preserve Families & Maintain Children Safely at Home**
- **Prevent Further Abuse by Strengthening Family Capacity**

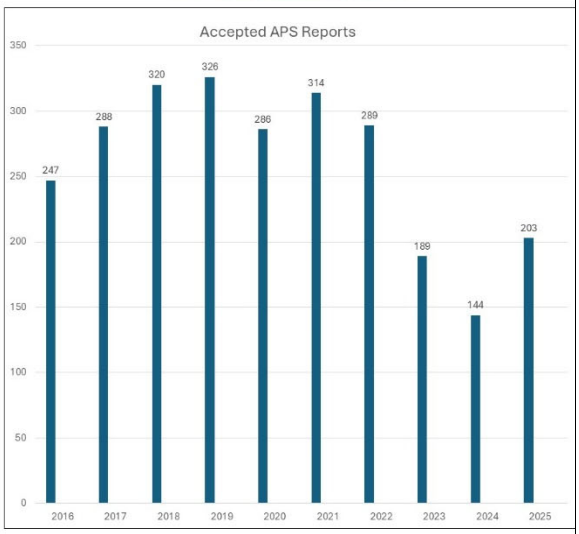
CPS In-Home Services Characteristics:

1. **Intensive Services**
   - Provided to families with greater needs; less intensive for families with fewer needs.
2. **Culturally Sensitive Services**
   - Delivered within the family's community context.
3. **Enhanced Worker Identification of Safety & Risks**
   - Helps county child welfare workers assess safety and risks.
4. **Family Engagement**
   - Involves children, youth, and families in planning, improving outcomes of safety and well-being.
5. **Encouraging Support Networks**
   - Promotes the development of support networks to help families cope with future challenges.



ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

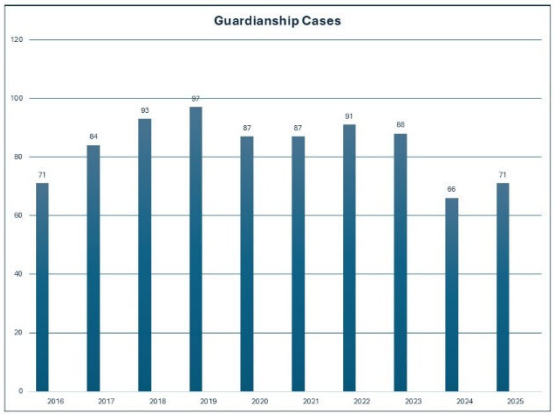
- Adults with disabilities may be vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation. **Adult Protective Services (APS)** is a unit within DSS that receives and evaluates reports to determine whether disabled adults are in need of protective services. Disabled adults reported to be abused, neglected or exploited and in need of protective services are eligible to receive this service regardless of income.



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GUARDIANSHIP

- There are times (due to mental health issues, developmental disabilities, medical issues, etc.) when an adult is declared incompetent to make their own decisions by the court. These incompetent adults are appointed a Guardian of the Person to assist them with their decision-making and to ensure that all of their needs are met. In 2025, Burke County DSS served 71 individuals as **Guardians of the Person**. The Department gained 30 new adult wards through court involvement in 2025.
- The Department established a contract in late 2023 with Hope for the Future for 17 slots to assist in the overall case management of wards. In 2024, 17 wards went to Hope for the Future, and they are currently managing 17 wards in 2025



2025- average of 57 individuals

BURKECOUNTY

ADULT HOME SPECIALIST

- This service is a mandated service inspecting and monitoring the operations of local adult care homes and family care homes.
- The **Adult Home Specialists** assess the facilities' compliance with rules and regulations set forth by DHSR. Areas inspected and monitored include resident rights, administration of medication, staff qualifications, and housekeeping. Further, they are responsible for ensuring safe and sanitary living conditions.
- The **Adult Home Specialists** are also responsible for conducting formal investigations into complaints received by the agency about concerns related to one or more of the licensing rules and regulations.
- Burke County DSS has two full-time Adult Services Social Workers who serve as Adult Home Specialists for the County. In 2025, there were 6 Adult Care Homes(but one closed during the year), leaving 5 Adult Care Homes and 12 Family Care Homes located in Burke County. There is also one local Adult Day Care Program that is monitored by the Adult Home Specialists.
- In 2025, the Adult Home Specialists conducted 114 investigations and 76 routine monitoring visits.

BURKECOUNTY

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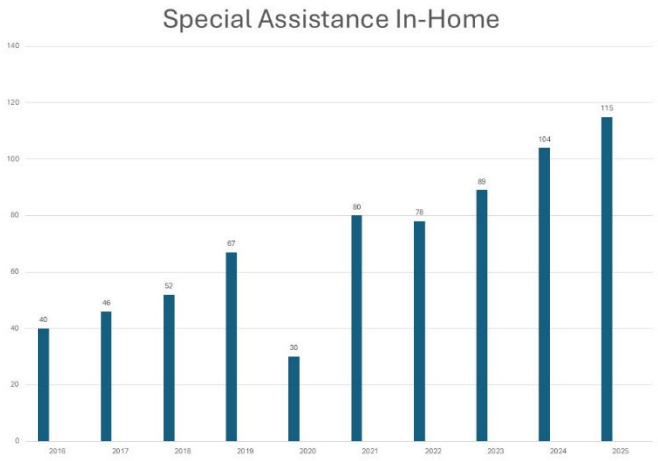
BURKECOUNTY

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE IN-HOME

The **Special Assistance In-Home Program (SA/IH)** is a mandated service that provides an alternative to placement in an Adult Care Home (ACH) for individuals who desire and are able to live at home safely with additional support.

In 2025, DSS served 115 adult individuals with the SA In-Home Service. An average of 52 Adults were managed by DSS, and 58 Adults were managed by the TCLI Program (Transitions to Community Living Initiatives).

SA/IH is now an entitlement program, and as a result, these numbers are growing monthly. The State mandates no waiting list for individuals needing this service.



COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

- CAP (Community Alternatives Program) is a Medicaid-covered program that allows an individual to receive assistance with activities of daily living in their home. This enables the individual to remain in their home safely as opposed to residing in a Nursing Home.
- CAP slots are now regionalized, and Burke County is in the Southwest Region catchment area along with the following counties:
  - Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Moore, Polk, Richmond, Rutherford, Stanly, Union
- Current Stats for this region are as follows:
  - 2, 515 total number of slots in this regional slot pool
  - 2,509 slots that are currently filled
  - 1,267 Total number on the southwest regional waitlist
  - None of those on the regional waitlist has a priority
- Burke Co. is currently serving 132 of these slots



THANK YOU

Questions?

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he called for a motion.

Motion: To accept the report as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, and Mike Stroud
ABSENT:	Randy Burns

ADJOURN
Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 3:56 p.m.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Mike Stroud, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, and Mike Stroud
ABSENT:	Randy Burns

Approved this 20th day of July 2026.

_____
Randy Burns, Acting Chair
Burke County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

_____
Morgan Buchanan
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners