

Latest Updates from the NCGA



From Sen. Natasha Marcus <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
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NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

September 6, 2024

2024 Legislative Session - Returning Next Week



The NCGA ended our official short session in June. As a result, there have been no committee meetings or votes over the last two weeks.

We got notice today that we will be **called back in for session on Monday, September 9** at noon. We expect to vote on motions to override Governor Cooper's veto of several controversial bills and on a supplemental budget that would appropriate, among other items, **an additional \$248 million for private school vouchers this year and an additional \$215.5 million recurring for 2025-26 and beyond**. The supplemental budget may also include some worthwhile spending for enrollment increases in K-12 public schools and community colleges and Medicaid reimbursement.

Red Line Updates



On Tuesday evening, **Charlotte City Council voted 10-1 in favor of buying the disused Norfolk Southern freight railroad that has been key to advancing the Red Line plan, which would allow a commuter train to run from Charlotte to Davidson**. Due to legislation passed earlier this year, the Red Line will end in Davidson and not Mooresville, as originally proposed. The purchase will cost the city \$91 million, and more money will be needed to build the train. To address this, **council members also voted to ask state legislators to allow a referendum to increase county sales tax by 1 cent**. If the NCGA is on board, the change could be on the November 2025 ballot. The [current draft](#) of the legislation includes a major change--only 40% of the sales tax revenue may be spent on rail transit, instead of the 80-90% of that revenue seen in previous versions. Learn more [here](#) and [here](#).

Your Energy Bill Reduced



Duke Energy Carolinas provides electricity to 2.9 million North Carolinians in the Charlotte, Durham, and the Triad regions. Beginning January 1, 2025, the company's residential customers who use around 1,000 kilowatts per month in the central North Carolina region will pay about 3.6% less, saving approximately \$62 per year. The rate reduction ordered by the N.C. Utilities Commission reflects the annual adjustment tied to the cost of fuel used to produce electricity, as well as the modernization of Duke's system. This rate reduction means that 1,000-kilowatt customers will pay approximately \$40 less a month than the national average, saving around \$500 a year. Learn more [here](#).

Updated on the Case: Madalina Cojocari Reward



Governor Cooper announced a \$25,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of someone responsible for the disappearance of Madalina Cojocari, who was last seen getting off of her school bus in 2022. Anyone who has information concerning this case is encouraged to contact the Cornelius Police Department at **(704) 892-1363** or the State Bureau of Investigation at **(919) 662-4500**. Learn more [here](#).

Residents Encouraged to Apply for Available Energy Assistance Funds Through Crisis Intervention Program (CIP)



[The Crisis Intervention Program \(CIP\)](#) is a year-round County-administered program that assists individuals and families in Mecklenburg County who are experiencing a cooling- or heating-related crisis, a life-threatening or health-related emergency, and have a past due or final notice on their heating or cooling utility account.

The program will continue to accept applications until available funds have been exhausted.

To qualify, households must:

- Have at least one U.S. citizen or legal resident in the household,
- Have an income at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level, and
- Be in a heating or cooling-related emergency.

Residents must also meet the income guidelines, be responsible for the bill, provide their account number, and show proof of income.

Interested parties can apply for funding via phone at **704-336-3000**, [online](#), or by visiting:

- **Wallace H. Kuralt Center, 301 Billingsley Road, Charlotte, NC 28211**
- **Valerie C. Woodard Community Resource Center, Suite 1000, 3205 Freedom Drive, Charlotte, NC 28208**
- **Ella B. Scarborough Community Resource Center, 430 Stitt Road, Charlotte, NC 28213**

For more information on the application process and requirements, visit [MeckNC.gov/Energy](#).

September 24: State Health Plan Transition to Aetna - Information Event in Charlotte



For state employees and retirees with questions about the impending switch from BCBS to Aetna - mark your calendar! In 2025, Aetna will be the new Third-Party Administrator for the North Carolina State Health Plan Network. To aid in the transition, Aetna is hosting 20 information events across the state.

On **Tuesday, September 24**, the Open Enrollment Aetna Outreach Bus will be at Central Piedmont Community College (**1201 Elizabeth Avenue Charlotte NC 28204**) from **11:00 AM - 3:00 PM**, and Aetna representatives will be available to answer questions about the transition, including the ability to look up your providers. **Attendees will have the opportunity to receive a flu shot on a first-come, first-served basis.** No registration is required, and attendance is free. Learn more [here](#).

Mecklenburg County Homes Program Now Available for Homeowners in Charlotte and Davidson



The Helping Out Mecklenburg Homeowners with Economic Support (HOMES) Program has returned for another season. From **July 1 – Nov. 22, 2024**, Mecklenburg County is partnering with the City of Charlotte and the Town of Davidson to provide **grant funding to qualifying residential homeowners to help address the rising costs of retaining their homes**. Program recipients must apply for consideration annually.

Grant funds will be paid to the Mecklenburg County Tax Collector, **who will reduce the total amount of taxes due for qualifying recipients' primary residence**. The amount granted will equal 35% of the Mecklenburg County tax amount on the last available tax bill, rounded to the nearest dollar, not to exceed \$648.

Applicants must not be participants in any of the following programs:

- North Carolina Homestead Exclusion
- North Carolina Property Tax Homestead Circuit Breaker
- North Carolina Disabled Veterans Exclusion
- North Carolina Present Use Value (PUV) Program

To be eligible:

- The property must be located within Mecklenburg County, NC.
- The property must be the owner's legal primary residence at the time of application and consistently for the past three consecutive years, as verified by recorded legal documents.
- The resident grant recipient's name(s) must be on the recorded deed, title, or life estate.

Paper applications can also be obtained from:

- Department of Community Resources **(3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 1000, Charlotte, NC 28208)**
- County Assessor's Office **(3205 Freedom Drive, Suite 3500, Charlotte NC 28208)**
- Ella B. Scarborough Community Resource Center **(430 Stitt Road, Charlotte, NC 28213)**

Learn more about the program and complete the application [here](#). Contact the HOMES Program at **980-314-4663** or 4homes@mecknc.gov for help with the application process.

Financial Update on the State's General Fund

Beginning Cash, Friday, August 23	13,119,042,403.75
Add Receipts:	
Tax and Non-Tax Receipts	524,754,477.03
Coronavirus Relief Receipts	0.00
Other Receipts	828,138,847.09
Less Disbursements:	
Payroll	871,227,518.41
State Aid	190,079,239.28
Medicaid/Other Provider Payments	191,181,115.48
Tax Refunds/Distributions	26,598,890.66
Debt Service	180,264.81
Coronavirus Relief Transfers Out	0.00
General Operating	525,452,988.75
Ending Cash, Friday, August 30	12,667,215,710.48
Less Reserved Cash:	
Due to Local Governments – Sales and Use Tax Payable	965,056,723.62
Other Reserves	9,764,576.04
American Recovery Plan Act Reserve	17,265,666.99
Carry Forward Reserve	669,617,705.90
Clean Water Drinking Water Reserve	0.00
Coronavirus Capital Projects Reserve	0.00
Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Earthquake Disaster Recovery Reserve	0.00
Economic Development Project Reserve	735,832,000.00
Federal Infrastructure Match Reserve	121,758,723.00
Housing Reserve	0.00
Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Reserve	27,623,240.47
Information Technology Reserve	410,307,521.00
Local Fiscal Recovery Reserve-ARPA	0.00
Local Govt Coronavirus Relief Reserve	0.00
Local Project Reserve	0.00
Medicaid Contingency Reserve	726,512,736.00
Medicaid Transformation Reserve	60,642,170.00
NC GREAT Reserve	0.00
NC Innovation Reserve	0.00
Opioid Abatement Reserve	48,571,688.89
Public School Contingency Reserve	0.00
Public School Need Based Capital Reserve	0.00
Reg Economic Dev Reserve	0.00
Repairs and Renovations Reserve	0.00
Retiree Supplement Reserve	0.00
SCIF General Fund Reserve	0.00
Savings Reserve	4,750,001,113.98
Stabilization and Inflation Reserve	1,000,000,000.00
State Emergency Response/Disaster Reserve	732,874,062.95
Transportation Reserve	0.00
Unfunded Liability Solvency Reserve	0.00
Wilmington Harbor Enhancements Reserve	283,800,000.00
World University Games Reserve	0.00
Unreserved Cash Balance, Friday, August 30	2,107,587,781.64

The Office of the State Controller (OSC) released the General Fund Cash Watch numbers for the week ending Friday, August 30. OSC provides a weekly update on the State’s General Fund cash position, which can be found at osc.nc.gov. **The current unreserved cash balance in state coffers is \$2.107 billion.**

The State Controller is North Carolina’s chief fiscal officer and serves as an independent resource to ensure the financial integrity of the State.

Links to Helpful Information

Domestic Violence Hotline: If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence or partner abuse, please call [Safe Alliance](#) at **704-332-2513** and they can help you.

Free Property Tax Assistance Services: Do you need help with your property taxes? The [Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy](#) is providing free assistance to help homeowners prepare their NC property tax relief applications. Call **980-256-7952** or visit their website to learn more [here](#).

Mecklenburg's County Bar [website](#) provides a list of pro bono resources for those unable to afford legal counsel.

Mecklenburg's Department of Community Resources provides individuals and families with [immediate access](#) to a diverse range of Mecklenburg County Health and Human Services programs and community partner services in Community Resources Centers throughout the County.

Mecklenburg's Energy Assistance Programs: Do you need help paying your heating or cooling bills? Mecklenburg offers [two different programs](#) to help eligible low-income households with their energy needs.

Property Tax values and histories in Mecklenburg County can be searched on [this site](#) that includes links to Polaris and information about past assessments. You can find more detailed information on real estate values on the [Mecklenburg](#) site.

Suicide Prevention: If you have thoughts of harming yourself, **please call or text 988**, the Suicide Prevention Hotline for help.

Unclaimed Cash! Visit [NCCash.com](#) today to see if you have unclaimed property under the supervision of the NC Treasurer's office. More info [here](#).

Voter Information: You can find your current information on the [NC Voter Lookup page](#).

Contact Our Office

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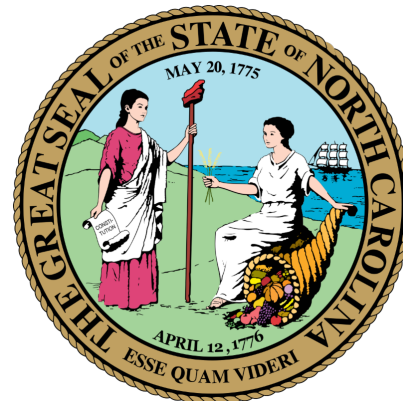
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How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

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