

NCCAA Post Conference Blast | #2 ❤️



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NCCAA Announcement | May 2025

Champions of the Community Action Movement



2025 Hall of Fame Inductees

From top left, 1st Row: Kenya Hemphill, Karen Ingram and Karen Harshman; 2nd Row: Cathy Rhyne, Krystina Chavis and Anita Lloyd; 3rd Row: Marsha Sheree Smith, Christie Paxton and Adele Sprouse.

At this year's 2025 NCCAA Conference, we proudly welcomed a remarkable group of individuals into the North Carolina Community Action Association Hall of Fame—each one a shining example of dedication, service, and impact in their communities. These heroes have given decades of heart, hustle, and humanity to the mission of helping people and changing lives.

Please join us in congratulating the 2025 Hall of Fame Inductees:

- **Kenya Hemphill, Blue Ridge Community Action Inc.** – From Head Start parent to Accounting Technician, Kenya's journey is a story of determination and devotion. Her behind-the-scenes work touches nearly every corner of the agency.
- **Karen Ingram, Blue Ridge Community Action Inc.** – A beloved Early Childhood Specialist, Karen brings warmth, wisdom, and unwavering dedication to the children and seniors in her community. Her faith and family values shine through in everything she does.
- **Karen Harshman, Blue Ridge Community Action Inc.** – For 29 years, Karen has not only managed BRCA's finances, she's helped build the capacity of the entire agency. She is a go-to leader for guidance, strategy, and unwavering support.
- **Cathy Rhyne, Blue Ridge Community Action Inc.** – Since 1998, Cathy has created safe, joyful classrooms for toddlers, helping them master life's first milestones with patience, kindness, and a heart full of purpose.
- **Krystina Chavis, North Carolina Community Action Association** – A gifted and compassionate leader and scholar, Krystina's capacity for management of complex tasks and commitment to excellence has improved countless lives and helped her rise to the position of Deputy Director.
- **Anita Lloyd, Blue Ridge Community Action Inc.** – A 27-year veteran in early childhood education, Anita has served in multiple classrooms and always steps up wherever she's needed. Her passion for service is matched only by her love for the children she teaches.
- **Marsha Sheree Smith, Experiment In Self-Reliance, Inc.** – As ESR's Board Chair and a proud U.S. Army veteran, Marsha's leadership has brought stability and spirit to the organization. She shows up—financially, physically, and emotionally—for staff, participants, and every celebration.
- **Christie Paxton, Mountain Projects, Inc.** – A 30-year Head Start veteran, Christie has served in nearly every role within the program. From Disabilities Coordinator to her current position as Director, she's changed countless lives through early childhood education and advocacy.
- **Adele Sprouse, Blue Ridge Community Action Inc.** – With a career full of roles across the agency, Adele has supported children's learning and development while championing best practices. Her commitment to excellence is unmatched.

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Thank you to our Conference Speakers

Here's a brief overview of the Guest Speakers and Workshop Sessions offered at the 2025 Conference this year. We are grateful to all guest speakers who came and shared their expertise with us.

Keynote Speaker



The Ties That Bind Us Are Often Unseen

Dr. James H. Johnson Jr., William R. Kenan Jr. Distinguished Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship at UNC Chapel Hill

Dr. James H. Johnson Jr. delivered a powerful and thought-provoking keynote address at this year's Annual Conference. As Director of the Urban Investment Strategies Center at the Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise, Dr. Johnson brought insight into our communities' challenges and opportunities—from economic inequality and workforce diversity to entrepreneurship and community development. Dr. Johnson shared a powerful message backed by compelling data: The ties that bind us are often unseen. By shifting our perspective, we can uncover new opportunities to address the challenges facing communities today—and into the future.

2025 Conference Workshop Sessions



Rapid Cycle Learning + Communication with Results Orientation

Carey L. Gibson, Deputy Director, ANCRT

A Certified Community Action Professional, Master ROMA Trainer and Implementer, Carey Gibson is the Project Manager for the National ROMA Training and Certification Project & Deputy Director of the Association of Nationally Certified ROMA Professionals.

Gibson led a workshop about Rapid Cycle Learning and how it aligns with applying the ROMA cycle in a focused way. She also discussed communication strategies related to the Office of Community Services' PEAAC Performance Management Framework.



NC Housing Update: Our Current Reality and Our Future Vision

Sonia Joyner, Director of Home Ownership Programs, NC Housing and Finance

In this session, attendees learned of the current reality of housing in North Carolina. Topics included rental housing and the funding challenges faced across the country. Attendees also learned about the legislative landscape as we sketch out a plan of action moving forward, as we all work to strengthen housing opportunities in North Carolina.

[Click here to see Sonia Joyner's presentation.](#)



Ensuring Weatherization Success + ASHRAE 62.2 + Energy Loss Prevention

Tony Erickson, Instructor, Everblue

Erickson and his team gave workshops focusing on how ventilation and indoor air quality standards apply in weatherization projects and how to identify and address common quality issues in weatherization to ensure compliance with standards and maximize energy efficiency. They also presented on Envelope Energy Loss tips to help weatherization professionals understand how energy is lost through a home's envelope



The Metrics of Moisture + Infiltration & Duct Leakage

Kevin Scott, Community Development Training Center Coordinator | Weatherization Division at Piedmont Triad Regional Council

Kevin Scott has learned core building science skills as an auditor with the North Carolina Weatherization Assistance Program. Scott led workshops that examined the methods and diagnosis for duct leakage using pressure pans and duct testers and also covered the methods of moisture transport, such as diffusion, capillary action, and airflow, and how they may be prevented. He also presented on Combustion Analysis and CAZ Testing.



Community Resilience Model Training in NC

Stephanie Cox, CSBG Program Director, Coastal Community Action, Inc.

Participants learned more about the Community Resiliency Model (CRM)®. The primary focus of this skills-based, stabilization program is to reset the natural balance of the nervous system. CRM's goal is to help to create "trauma-informed" and "resiliency-focused" communities that share a common understanding of the impact of trauma and chronic stress on the nervous system and how resiliency can be restored or increased using this skills-based approach.

[Click here to view the presentation.](#)



Time is Flying and You Are the Pilot

Dr. Landon B. Mason, Executive Director of Economic Improvement Council, Inc.

Dr. Mason led a two-part leadership session "*Time is Flying and You Are the Pilot*," focusing on time management and personal effectiveness. Participants explored strategies for prioritizing tasks, setting goals, overcoming procrastination, and maintaining work-life balance. Attendees learned strategies to take control of their schedules, prioritize tasks, set goals, and make intentional choices about how they spend their time.

Legislative Update with David Bradley

A much-anticipated keynote at each year's conference is the legislative update from David Bradley, CEO and co-founder of the National Community Action Foundation. As a private non-profit organization funded solely by non-governmental contributions, NCAF represents the funding and policy interests of the nation's 1,000 Community Action Agencies before Congress and the Executive Branch.





Leading and Envisioning at the Next Level

Dr. Kenston J. Griffin, Founder and CEO, Dream Builders Communication, Inc.

Dr. Griffin led a session designed to provide valuable insights drawn from regional and national best practices, offering real-world examples of organizations with similar missions and scopes of work. Participants learned actionable strategies to cultivate meaningful partnerships, implement research-driven tools, and drive impactful change in areas such as change management, process improvement, and operational efficiency.

Tiffney Marley | CCAP, NCRT National Community Action Partnership Update

Tiffney Marley is the Vice President for Practice Transformation at the National Community Action Partnership, where she leads training and technical assistance strategies to maximize impact and transform anti-poverty practices of the Community Action Network. This work has many dimensions, including leadership of the National Learning Communities Resource Center (LCRC)—the national Community Action innovations hub for addressing the causes and conditions of poverty, working with CAAs to redesign their programmatic strategies, and collaborating with governmental and private stakeholders on special initiatives to transform organizations and systems. See you at the NCAP Conference, Tiffney! Thanks for the update.



The Art of Intentional Thinking

Terry David, CEO, Families & Communities Rising

In part one of this two-part session, participants explored how mindset can shape the direction of an agency. They discussed the challenges of shifting thinking—not just giving orders, but reimagining how to lead, support, and serve others. Part Two focused on the mindsets of

Control, Perseverance, and Action, emphasizing how effective leadership comes from listening and including others in advancing the agency's mission. [Click here to view the presentation.](#)

HEAL NC – Building Resilience & Mental Wellness

Peg Morrison, HEAL NC

Peg Morrison discussed the partnership between WAGES and NCCAA, HEAL NC. This program is designed to empower families to stay together and achieve sustainable livelihoods. Attendees learned about how the HEAL NC model can be implemented in your local community to support the mental health and wellness of women and families as they work to build sustainable livelihoods.

[Click here for the presentation.](#)



Duke IQ Weatherization Program Update

Exploring New Changes & Fully Funded Project Opportunities

Deb Hill, Senior Director, TRC

Deb Hill and her team discussed recent updates to the Duke Income Qualified (IQ) Weatherization Program. The session included a comprehensive overview of program changes, with special emphasis on the introduction and implementation of new fully funded project options. Attendees learned a clear understanding of updated guidelines, eligibility criteria, and project scopes designed to enhance energy efficiency for income-qualified households.



Private Childcare

A Holistic Solution for the Community and Your Agency

Patricia Beier, Chief Executive Officer, WAGES

Patricia Beier led a workshop about about collaborative efforts to better serve children and families in your community.



Closing Session



Trevor Lodgson, Government Programs Administrator, TROSA

Trevor Lodgson has both professional expertise and personal experience to support individuals navigating the challenges of reentry. After spending many years in active addiction and becoming justice-involved, Trevor entered TROSA, a recovery program, as a resident and successfully completed the program. Now, he dedicates his work to helping others rebuild their lives through TROSA's Modified Therapeutic Community model, which emphasizes accountability, evidence based practices, skill development, and peer support.



Nora Spencer, Founder & CEO, Hope Renovations

Nora El-Khoury Spencer is Founder and CEO of Hope Renovations, a nonprofit aimed to empower underemployed women and gender-expansive people into careers in construction while helping older adults stay in their homes their whole lives. Drawing on her background in social work and corporate recruiting, Nora created a pre-apprenticeship training program that empowers women and individuals of all gender identities to pursue high-wage careers in construction. Hope Renovations also serves the community by providing critical home repairs and renovations for seniors, allowing trainees to gain hands-on experience while making a meaningful difference.

Share Community Action News with a Friend

As a member of the NCCAA community, we work to empower low-income families, change people's lives for the better and improve the communities we serve. We are all dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other. Please take a moment and forward this news to a co-worker and grow the community of professionals dedicated to this important work.

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Stay tuned for more Conference news next week!

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