



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Carolina Engagement Council Newsletter August 2024

Carolina Engagement Council, welcome back to our beautiful campus! We are excited to continue this work together and benefit from your wonderful support and guidance.

This summer has been busy as we gear up for a big 2024-25 academic year. Read on for more about our next major Carolina Across 100 program, the latest updates on RuralRx, Tar Heel Bus Tour, Our State, Our Wellbeing, and more!

First Look: Our State, Our Homes

Nearly one in five homeowners and half of all renters are housing cost-burdened in North Carolina. Supply shortages and rising housing costs have reached every corner of the state, impacting economic prosperity, health, and overall community well-being.

Carolina Across 100's next program will focus on helping communities take on the state's housing challenge.

Launching in September 2024, this 18-month program will support a cohort of cross-sector community teams committed to improving access to and availability of affordable housing options in the state.



This program will be conducted in partnership with the [Development Finance Initiative](#) at the UNC School of Government and other UNC experts in housing and related subject matter.

Through participation in Carolina Across 100's program, communities will establish and strengthen cross-sector teams composed of members from local government, nonprofits, developers, financial institutions, and community representatives to work toward shared visions for improving access to affordable housing. Partnering with these teams will help them understand the local conditions contributing to housing challenges, identify legal and financial tools to support affordable housing development, and implement strategies for educating and communicating with stakeholders about local housing needs.

This issue has implications for every discipline on our campus. If you know of faculty who might be interested in engaging with this program, please reach out to Michael Welker at mwelker@sog.unc.edu. Stay tuned for more information about this program as we get closer to the launch date in September!

RuralRx

The [UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy's Rural Pharmacy Health Initiative](#) (RuralRx) internship places the School's pharmacy students in rural practice sites to advance healthcare accessibility for Eastern North Carolina communities.

This successful program also works to grow and sustain the future rural healthcare workforce. As these pharmacy students become rooted in the rural NC communities where they were placed, they often choose to stay in the area to build their professional careers.

[Read what this year's RuralRx interns had to say](#) about their experiences bridging the rural pharmaceutical resource gap.

Tar Heel Bus Tour Minigrants

The Tar Heel Bus Tour (THBT) Minigrant Program is a project of UNC-Chapel Hill, funding campus-community projects that work to make meaningful impacts in communities across the state. We plan to share an assessment of the six grants made in the 2023 program this fall as faculty and staff participate in the 2024 THBT!

In April 2024, \$20,000 in funding was awarded to projects featured on the 2023 THBT in Dare and Robeson counties. Previously, we shared that we were excited to announce that the projects "Sustaining the Future Generations of Robeson County, N.C.: Employing Talking Circles and Wellbeing in Native Adolescent Youth" and "Exploring the Impact of Cultural Nuances and Contextual Factors on Mental Health/Mental Well-being Perceptions among Residents aged 18-34 years in Dare County, N.C." were both awarded \$10,000. We are excited about these projects' impact on our state.

Watch for more information from the Carolina Center for Public Service about the 2024 Tar Heel Bus Tour routes and how to apply to join the group that travels across the state learning from local leaders!

Our State, Our Wellbeing: Partnering to Prevent Suicide

On June 13, the Carolina Across 100 Initiative and the UNC Suicide Prevention Institute partnered with "Our State, Our Wellbeing" collaborative teams to host 400 attendees from more than 60 counties at the [Statewide Summit on Suicide Prevention](#). Local leaders, insightful speakers, and over 40 Resource Expo participants gathered at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill to build connections and share resources to advance local action on suicide prevention.



Speakers represented the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [NC Department of Health and Human Services](#) and other state government partners, the Suicide Prevention Institute, [UNC Department of Psychiatry](#), community organizations, local government, academic institutions, health providers, and

other organizations engaged in suicide prevention and mental and behavioral health. A Resource Expo held during the Summit enabled attendees to interact with representatives from more than [40 different organizations](#) and connect with resources to bring back to their communities.

Watch this [video](#) to learn more about the Our State, Our Wellbeing teams and their work. For more on the summit, visit our [event website](#).

CX100/ncIMPACT Team Member Spotlight: Jacob Hunter



Jacob Hunter joined the ncIMPACT Initiative team as Lead Data and Policy Analyst on July 1st. He is a double Tar Heel, earning a B.A. with double majors in Political Science and Public Policy, a minor in Music, and a Master of Public Policy degree. Born and raised in Kinston, North Carolina, much of Jacob’s previous experience focused on data-driven research and collaborative engagement to understand the various social and environmental policy issues that affect rural North Carolina communities. Before starting his current position, he worked as a Research Interviewer for the Dynamics of Extreme Events, People, and Places (DEEPP) Project at the Carolina Population Center and as a Program Associate for MDC, which works across southern states to

advance equity and improve economic mobility.

Jacob’s work with Carolina Across 100 (CX100) and the ncIMPACT Initiative will focus primarily on research and collaborative programming for the upcoming affordable housing program, workforce development, and economic development. He will also lead data analysis and visualization for CX100 programs more broadly. He is excited to share his research skills and passion for collaboration as part of the CX100 team to build partnerships and address challenges across his home state of North Carolina. In his spare time, Jacob enjoys trips to the NC coast, attending UNC athletic events, and spending time with his miniature dachshund, Dolly.

Celebrating Carolina Across 100’s Progress to Date

Recently, we compiled data on our progress toward our CX100 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). We are proud to share these numbers with you, shown in the image on the right and this [PDF](#).

We appreciate everything you Carolina Engagement Council (CEC) members have done to help us reach these milestones!

Save the Date for the September CEC meeting!

The CEC’s first meeting of the academic year is scheduled for Monday, September 23.

Margaret Barrett (margaret.barrett@unc.edu) sends Outlook calendar invitations with locations or Zoom links for these CEC meetings. Please let her know if you haven’t received yours. We look forward to connecting with you all soon!

