

THURSDAY, JUNE 25

7:30 a.m.

Off-site: Guided Fly-Fishing

Cost: Registration is \$50 per person. A \$20 gratuity for the guide is customary and paid directly by participants. Participation is limited to 10 participants (NCCCMA members only). Sponsored by McGill Associates.

Join colleagues for a guided morning of fly-fishing in the mountains near Asheville. The outfitter will provide all necessary gear—including waders, rods, lures—and light snacks. Participants should plan to wear a hat and polarized sunglasses. A North Carolina fishing license is required and may be purchased in advance (10 day or annual inland licenses available). Participants will depart at 7:30 a.m. from the front of the Renaissance Hotel, with participants following the guide in their own vehicles (or participants may carpool) to the West Fork of the Pigeon River near Canton, approximately 35–40 minutes away. We will return to the hotel by early afternoon.

9:00 a.m.

Off-site: LaZoom Explore the City Bus Tour

Cost: Registration is free thanks to the generous sponsorship of McAdams, though advance registration is still required. Limited to 40 people.

Learn Asheville's history, discover hidden gems, and laugh at LaZoom's quirky sense of

adventure on our flagship 90-minute Asheville tour.

9:00 a.m.

Off-site: Guided Bike Ride at Biltmore

Cost: Registration is free thanks to the generous sponsorship of McGill Associates, though advance registration is still required. Participation includes Biltmore Grounds Admission. Limited to 30 people. This event is only open to NCCCMA members and one guest.

Spin along beside rivers and fields on a guided bike adventure at Biltmore! The group will be fitted with helmets and bikes before enjoying a ride on a combination of paved, gravel-packed, and dirt trails and roads. Ride at a leisurely pace with occasional stops to learn about the biographical and natural history of the Biltmore Estate from your guide. The tour starts at 9:00 am and participants must arrive 45 minutes in advance.

9:15 a.m.

Off-site: Guided Hike at Craggy Pinnacle Trail

Cost: Registration is free thanks to the generous sponsorship of WithersRavenel, though advance registration is still required.

Join your peers for a mid-morning hike along the scenic [Craggy Pinnacle Trail](#). This 1.2-mile out-and-back trail, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway, offers a moderate, rewarding walk through one of the area's most beautiful landscapes. We'll hit

the trail at around 10:30 am, with the hike itself taking approximately 45-50 minutes to complete. Craggy Gardens is about one hour from the Asheville Renaissance Hotel. Light snacks and water will be provided to keep you fueled along the way, and a boxed lunch will be waiting for you at the conclusion of the hike. *Please note that conditions in the mountains can change rapidly, so please plan for weather events, like rain.* Transportation will be provided by WithersRavenel for the first 11 to use this link [here](#) to send an email requesting transportation. If riding with WithersRavenel meet at the Asheville Renaissance main entrance at 9:15 am. If driving yourself meet at the [Craggy Dome Parking Overlook](#) at 10:30 am (3641 Blue Ridge Pkwy, Barnardsville, NC).

10:00-4:00 p.m.

Off-site: Pre-Conference Golf Tournament

Location: Grove Park Inn, 10 Club View Road, Asheville, NC 28804

Check-in & registration: 10:00 a.m.

Lunch: 11:00 a.m.

Shotgun start: 12:00 p.m.

Cost: \$160 per person in advance. Fee includes greens fee, golf cart, and lunch and “trash package” which consists of one mulligan, one throw, one roll and one tee off from the red tee box. If space is available, on-site registration is \$180 per person. If registering on-site, payment must be made by check or cash.

Captain’s Choice Format. Separate registration required. Proceeds go to the NCCCMA Civic Education Program to support teacher training and the NCCCMA Civic Education online book “Local Government in North Carolina.”

12:00–5:00 p.m. Registration Desk Hours (Pre-Function)

2:00–5:00 p.m. Pre-Conference Workshop: Artificial Intelligence and Local Government Innovation (Windsor).

Members of the School of Data Science and Department of Political Science and Public

Administration at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte are running an applied, hands-on training session to help local government managers and administrators to begin implementing new technologies into administrative tasks. The presenters will focus on applications of Artificial Intelligence in state and local government with a particular focus on identifying use cases and areas for technological assistance, connecting data and tasks across entities within and across governments for efficiency, and building organizational readiness for innovation. The structure will emphasize hands on training, peer learning, and interaction amongst the presenters and participants.

Speakers: Jason Windett, Director of Research, Professor of Data Science, Professor of Political Science and Public Administration, UNC-Charlotte School of Data Science.

Robert Fox, Senior Lecturer in Data Science, UNC Charlotte, School of Data Science

5:00–6:30 p.m. Networking Reception (Patio)

FRIDAY, JUNE 26

7:00–5:00 p.m. Registration Desk Hours (Pre-Function)

7:30–8:30 a.m. Buffet Breakfast (Salon A)

8:30-10:15 a.m. General Session: Helene and Everything After: The State of Recovery in WNC (Salons BC)

In communities most impacted by Tropical Storm Helene, the past is delineated, and time is contextualized as “before Helene” and “after Helene.” A relatively short event changed everything anyone could remember, and everything that would come. Twenty-one months “after Helene,” this session will introduce the state of recovery through voices

of local government managers who have lived, and continue to live, through the stages of disbelief, response, worry, heartbreak, anger, frustration, remembrance, celebration, and continued recovery. Governor Josh Stein and GROW NC Director Matt Calabria have also been invited to provide a big-picture look at recovery, and its evolution during a shift in the federal government's role.

Moderator: Matt McKirahan, Town Manager, Town of Mills River

Speakers: The Honorable Josh Stein, Governor of the State of North Carolina

Matt Calabria, Director, Governor's Recovery Office for Western NC (GROW NC)

Cara Reeves, Town Manager, Town of Laurel Park

Jessica Trotman, Town Manager, Town of Columbus

Ashley Wooten, County Manager, County of McDowell

10:15–10:30 a.m. Break

10:30–12:00 p.m. Concurrent Sessions

Session 1: Tools for Changing Organizational Culture (Windsor)

Creating a great organizational culture improves performance and personnel well-being.

However, culture can be extremely resistant to change. This session will focus on practicing specific applied skillsets that enable managers to better understand and lead positive cultural change.

Speaker: Dr. Elliot Stoller, UNC School of Government

Session 2: Beyond Transparency: Earning Public Trust Where It Counts (Salons BC)

While polling indicates declining trust across all levels of government institutions, trust in local government remains relatively strong and is essential for effective local government. This session tackles the critical issues of fiscal responsibility and law enforcement, areas often under public scrutiny. We'll examine best practices in transparency, civic education, and community engagement, offering actionable strategies you can implement to build and sustain trust within your own community. Participants will hear from experienced practitioners and engage in facilitated discussion on strategies that work and those that don't. Walk away with real-world strategies you can put to work immediately in your own community.

Moderator: Mark Matthews, Assistant Town Manager, Town of Fuquay-Varina

Panelists: Chet Effler, Public Safety Risk Consultant, NC League of Municipalities

Dr. Colt Jensen, UNC School of Government

12:00–1:30 p.m. Networking Lunch (Salon A)

1:30–3:00 p.m. Concurrent Sessions

Session 1: Turning Opportunity into Momentum: Civic Pride and Engagement for America 250 & Beyond (Windsor)

As America's 250th anniversary approaches, local governments have a unique opportunity to build on the momentum of this milestone and strengthen civic pride and connection throughout 2026 and beyond. This session will highlight practical, replicable strategies—from storytelling and public art to broader community engagement initiatives—that showcase the impact of local government and foster meaningful connection. Our panelists will share initiatives from their communities, offering adaptable and timeless ideas to help

harness a sense of civic pride that endures well beyond 2026.

Moderators: Jessica Roth, Assistant Town Manager, Town of Southern Pines

Marcus Abernethy, Business Services Consultant, NC League of Municipalities

Panelists: Zachary Parker, Town Manager, Town of Boiling Springs

Courtney Heaton, Communication Specialist
Town of Southern Pines

Adam Gaub, Director of Communications,
County of Gaston

**Session 2: Data Centers & Local Communities:
Lessons from North Carolina (Salons BC)**

As demand for digital infrastructure grows, data centers are becoming an increasingly prominent land use across North Carolina, bringing both economic promises and complex local impacts. This session features perspectives from state, county, and municipal staff whose communities have approved, denied, or placed moratoriums on data center proposals. Panelists will discuss key considerations such as infrastructure demands, environmental impacts, tax revenue expectations, and community response. Attendees will leave with practical insights and policy considerations to help guide decision-making around future data center development.

Moderator: Lee Worsley, Executive Director,
Central Pines Regional Council

Panelists: David Payne, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs & Economic Development, NC Department of Environmental Quality

Bruce Venable, AICP, Planner III, Town of Apex

Ryan Rase, Assistant Town Manager, Town of Mooresville

Jenn Bosser, President & CEO, Iredell County
Economic Development

3:00–3:15 p.m. Break

**3:15–4:45 p.m. NCLM Update (Salons BC)
NCACC Update (Windsor)**

**5:00–6:30 p.m. Evening Reception
(Patio)**

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

**7:00–12:00 p.m. Registration Desk Hours
(Pre-Function)**

**7:00–8:00 a.m. Buffet Breakfast
(Salon A)**

**8:00–9:15 a.m. NCCCMA Business Meeting
(Salon A)**

9:15–9:30 a.m. Break

**9:30 a.m.–11:0 a.m. General Session: Living the
ICMA Code of Ethics: Real-World Challenges
and Peer Perspectives
(Salons BC)**

This interactive session will engage participants in a facilitated roundtable discussion of real world ethics dilemmas and case studies grounded in the ICMA Code of Ethics. Attendees will work collaboratively to analyze scenarios commonly faced by local government managers, discuss potential courses of action, and consider the ethical principles at stake. The session will conclude with a moderate practitioner panel, where experienced local government professionals will share insights, lessons learned, and practical strategies for navigating ethical challenges. An open group discussion will follow, allowing participants to compare perspectives, ask questions, and reflect on how ethical decision making shapes credibility, trust, and professional leadership.

Speaker/Moderator: Jessica Cowles, Ethics Director, ICMA

Panelists: Eddie Smith, Deputy City Manager, City of Kannapolis

Jodi Miller, Town Manager, Town of Garner

Mary Furtado, County Manager, County of Catawba

11:00–11:30 a.m. Break (Hotel Check-out)

**11:30–12:30 p.m. Closing General Session:
A Heart to Serve (Salons BC)**

Let's go on a journey to learn what characteristics make a great leader in addition to what great leaders do daily. Through stories, engagement, videos, and interactions we will take a deep dive into how we can grow and learn to improve our leadership styles. We are going to explore how important the HEART is when it comes to leading and how SERVING can be the difference in how efficient leaders impact those around them. The goal is for you to enter with an open mind and exit with 'A Heart to Serve'!

Speaker: Woody Taylor, Associate Head Men's Basketball Coach, UNC Asheville