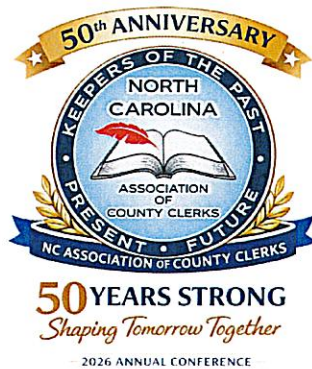




Hello TEAM,

I am excited to announce registration for our Fall Regional Academies is open. If you're unable to attend the Fall Regional in your area, feel free to register for any location that fits your schedule. All workshops are open to County Clerks, Deputy Clerks, Municipal Clerks, and COG Clerks. You do not have to be a member of the Association to register and attend.

Here are the locations and dates for each 2026 Regional event:

- **Eastern Regional** – September 11, 2026
Hosted by Dana Cuddington and Susie Reeves, Johnston County
- **Western Regional** – September 18, 2026
Hosted by Kennedy Freeman, Polk County
- **Piedmont Regional** – September 25, 2026
Hosted by Dana Crisco, Randolph County

The Professional Development and Conference planning Committee has been hard at work developing agenda topics that will be helpful, fun and engaging. You won't want to miss this! Not only will this be an opportunity for learning, fellowship and fun, but you will also earn valuable credit hours toward certifications!

Thank you for all you do, and I hope to see you at one of the upcoming Regionals.

Maria Hass, CMC, NCMCC
President, North Carolina Association of County Clerks
Clerk to the Board, Cherokee County

D. Marche Pittman
County Manager

Jana L. Berg
County Attorney

Kennedy Freeman
Clerk to Board



Myron Yoder
Chairman
David Moore
Vice - Chairman
Paul (Little) Beiler
Commissioner
Tommy Melton
Commissioner
Jennifer Hargett
Commissioner

August 7, 2026

Dear County Clerks, Deputy Clerks, Municipal Clerks, and COG Administrative Assistants/Clerks,

Polk County is excited to host the 2026 Western Regional Clerks Academy on Friday, September 18, 2026!

The Academy will be held at the Columbus Public Library, located at 1289 W. Mills Street, Columbus, NC 28722. A map to the library and a list of nearby hotels are included in your packet for those planning to stay overnight.

The North Carolina Association of County Clerks Program Committee has worked closely with the UNC School of Government to create an engaging program for this year's regional academies. I believe each of the topics we have planned will be beneficial to all our organizations.

I am also excited to share my community service project. Polk County has partnered with the Foothills Humane Society to host an Animal Supply Drive for animals waiting to find their forever homes.

Last October, our Board's Vice-Chairman walked into my office holding Chihuahua puppies and insisted I needed one. I told him there was no way that was happening. A month later, I brought home a little blonde Chihuahua from the Foothills Humane Society and named him JJ.

JJ has brought so much joy to my life, and I hope this supply drive helps other shelter animals feel a little more loved while they wait for families of their own. I've included a list of the shelter's most-needed items, but feel free to have a little fun with it as well!

If you have any questions, you can contact me at (828) 894-3301 or kfreeman@polknc.gov.

Thank you, and I can't wait to welcome you to Polk County in September!

Kennedy Freeman

Clerk to the Board, Polk County

Animal Supply Drive



Foothills Humane Society (FHS) is a private non-profit, 501(c)3 no-kill animal welfare organization. Their mission is to shelter and care for stray and surrendered animals within the community, reunite lost pets with their owners, find loving forever homes through adoption and rescue partnerships, and promote responsible pet ownership within the community.

While waiting to be adopted, shelter animals can experience stress, uncertainty, and loneliness. Any contribution will help provide comfort, love, and the daily care they need, making their time at the shelter a little easier until they find the loving family they deserve.

Current Needs:

❖ Blankets and Beds

❖ Collars and Slip Leads

❖ Dog and Cat Toys

- Tennis Balls
- Treat Puzzles
- PomPom Balls
- Chew Toys

❖ Dog Waste Bags

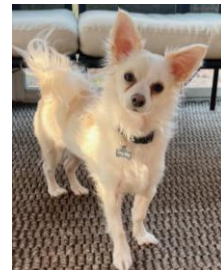
❖ HotHands Hand Warmers

❖ Greenies Pill Pockets

❖ Treats and Bones

- Elk Antlers
- Milk Bones
- Puppy Teething Bones
- Training Treats
- Churu Cat Treats

Here is a picture of my dog, JJ who was adopted from Foothills Humane Society last October!



2026 Western Regional Clerks Academy List of Recommended Hotels:

Quality Inn and Suites Flat Rock; (828) 393-0892

111 Commercial Blvd, Flat Rock, NC 28731

<https://www.choicehotels.com/north-carolina/flat-rock/quality-inn-hotels/nc783?mc=llgoxxpx>

Mountain Inn and Suites Flat Rock; (828) 692-7772

755 Upward Rd, Flat Rock, NC 28731

<http://www.mountaininnflatrock.com/>

Fairfield by Marriott Inn and Suites Hendersonville Flat Rock; (828) 513-5100

836 Upward Rd, Flat Rock, NC 28731

<https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/avlhv-fairfield-inn-and-suites-hendersonville-flat-rock/overview/?scid=f2ae0541-1279-4f24-b197-a979c79310b0>

Holiday Inn Express Forest City by IHG; (888) 465 4329

200 Holiday Inn Dr, Forest City, NC 28043

https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/forest-city/frcnc/hoteldetail?cm_mmc=GoogleMaps-_EX-_US-_FRCNC

Hampton Inn and Suites Forest City; (828) 382-1001

227 Sparks Dr, Forest City, NC 28043

https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/avlfchx-hampton-suites-forest-city/?SEO_id=GMB-AMER-HX-AVLFCHX

1289 W. Mills St,
Columbus, NC 28722

Legend

-  Columbus Library
-  ICC Polk Campus
-  Parking
-  Library Loop Trailhead



Polk County Public Library (Columbus Location)



DIRECTIONS

From US-74 (I-26), take Exit 67 toward Columbus.
Follow NC-108 W/Lynn Rd for approx. 4.5 miles.



NEED HELP?

Polk County Public Library
828-894-8721 | www.polklibrary.org



Western Regional Advanced Clerk Academy

September 18, 2026

Columbus Public Library

1289 W Mills St, Columbus, NC

AGENDA

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. | Registration/Continental Breakfast
<i>(Breakfast Provided by All Good Things Bakery)</i> |
| 8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. | Welcome/Introductions
Kennedy Freeman, Clerk to the Board |
| | Welcoming Remarks
Myron Yoder, Chair
Marche Pittman, County Manager |
| 8:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. | Big Phish: Clerking in the Age of AI
Kristina Wilson, Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government |
| 10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | Break/Snacks |
| 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Social Media Mayhem
Kristina Wilson, Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government |
| 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. | Lunch
<i>(Lunch Provided by Huckleberry's)</i> |
| 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. | What to Know About Managing Boards & Commissions
Kristina Wilson, Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government |
| 2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. | Break/Snacks |
| 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. | New Board Member Orientation |

Kristina Wilson, Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government

3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Q/A Session

Kristina Wilson, Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government

4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Regional Wrap-up/Questions

Maria Hass, President, North Carolina Association of County Clerks

Kristina Wilson, Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government

The MMC Advanced Academies are presented by the School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The school is the International Institute of Municipal Clerks' approved provider of educational programs for clerks in North Carolina.

Clerks who successfully complete MMC Advanced Academy will be eligible for 3.00 MMC/CMC points and 6.0 credit hours towards recertification as an NCCCC or, if applicable, certification or recertification as an NCMCC.

Partial credit is not available for the Academy.

**North Carolina Association of County Clerks
Speaker/Session Information**

Big Phish: Clerking in the Age of AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an integral part of today's technological landscape. This session will explore the basics of AI, how clerks can use AI to their benefit, and areas to exercise caution. This course will also explore how to handle public records requests in today's technological world, including how to respond to phishing attempts and AI-generated requests.

Social Media Mayhem

Social media has evolved much more quickly than statutes and case law. That leaves clerks and other local government practitioners wondering how to handle common social media issues. When can local government officials or employees hide or delete comments? When can they block users? What are the retention requirements for social media posts? Can local governments manage what officials or employees say online? This session will explore those questions.

What to Know About Managing Boards & Commissions

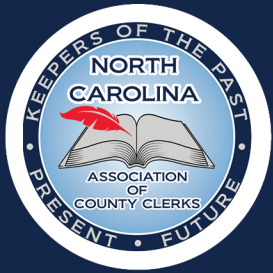
Clerks wear many hats and their many responsibilities include management of boards, committees, and commissions. This session will explain the legal framework surrounding county boards and commissions and will bring clerks together to share tips and tricks of the trade for managing boards and commissions.

New Board Member Orientation

In an election year, clerks sometimes have even more responsibilities and obligations than in a typical year. One of these additional duties is orienting newly elected commissioners. This course will explore the best methods for orienting new members, including important topics and key players to involve in the orientation process.

Kristina Wilson:

Kristina Wilson joined the School of Government in September 2021. Her work focuses on local government structure and authority, board procedures, public records and transparency issues. Prior to joining the School, Wilson was a civil litigation associate at Yates, McLamb & Weyher LLP where her practice included medical malpractice defense, general liability defense, employment disputes, and constitutional matters in both federal and state court. She also worked for the U.S. Department of Justice in its Access to Justice Office addressing civil constitutional issues including nuisance ordinances and public housing and a proposed civil right to counsel. Prior to law school, Wilson worked as a communications associate for the Center for Global Development, an international development think tank in Washington, D.C. Wilson earned her J.D. cum laude from Wake Forest University School of Law where she was a published member and executive online editor of the Wake Forest Law Review. Wilson earned undergraduate degrees in English and Spanish cum laude from Georgetown University. She is a member of the North Carolina State Bar.



ANNUAL RAFFLE BASKET FUNDRAISER

2026

Donation Drive for Raffle Basket Fundraiser at Master Clerk Academies in November

- Comfy-Cozy Basket (blankets, candles, fuzzy socks, spa items, etc)
- Movie & Game Night (board games, card games, popcorn, movie style candy)
- Cooler of Cheer (wine & lottery tickets)

We will collect items during each Regional and at November Academies.

Please contact Dale Stiles at dstiles@catawbacountync.gov with any questions.

