

Legislative Agenda

Finalizing 2025-2026 Priorities

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Today We'll Cover...

- **State and Federal Priorities**
 - Top 3 Asks
 - Opportunity List
- **Highlight edits based on October work session**
- **Need Board endorsement for slate of priorities**

Three Prong Approach to Legislative Priorities

General Guidance

- Policy guidance to CMO and contracted lobbyists to:
 - 1) reflect ongoing Board interests, and
 - 2) allow discretion to react quickly to legislative actions

Top Three Asks

- To speak with a single, clear voice, Board will set a short list of top priorities

Opportunity List

- We can't predict what issues will be "hot" each session. The Board will approve a list of issues that, if an opportunity arises, CMO has discretion to pursue.

Recommended Top 3 - State

Housing Affordability

- Advocate for new State policy and programs
- Changes to existing programs

Foster Care

- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Youth with acute needs
- State supported facilities
- Kinship care supports

Tax Lien Signage

- Repeal provision requiring physical signage at lien properties
- Not helpful or safe

Housing Affordability

- **Support housing developers by expanding State's low-income housing tax credit program**
 - Make criteria more flexible
- **State-wide gap financing**
 - Loans, grant programs, housing trusts
- **Authorize counties to develop teacher housing**

Foster Care

- **Clarify roles of LMEs and other entities for placement of youth with acute needs**
- **Mandate NCDHHS create and operate regional placement facilities**
- **Seek full State reimbursement for County financial support to Fictive Kin (supporting kinship care),**
 - *(Childcare - providers generally eligible for childcare vouchers)*
- **Medicaid coverage for foster family supplies,**
 - *including diapers, feminine hygiene products*

Tax Lien Signage

- **S607, enacted July 2024, requires a posted sign on every lien property**
- **Unfunded mandate**
 - *Estimated cost of \$150,000*
- **Wake opposes this requirement**
 - Not safe
 - Not consistent with customer-friendly approach
 - Inefficient
- **Seek repeal of this provision**

Opportunity List - State

Advocacy work not guaranteed, but CMO staff have discretion to pursue if opportunity

- Support for public schools
 - Instructional Assistants
 - Teaching Fellows Program
 - Social and emotional resources
 - *Universal meals*
- Property tax relief
- Continuing Medicaid coverage for incarcerated individuals
- More funding for:
 - Veterans services
 - Orphan roads
 - *Broadband access and affordability, digital literacy*
 - *JCPC programs*
 - *Clerks of Court*
 - *SmartStart / Childcare programs*

Recommended Top 3 - Federal

Earmark Requests

- Criteria-based requests
- Adapt to new 2025 congressional map

Housing Affordability

- Preserve block grants
- Expand LIHTC
- Permanently fund pilot programs

EMS Medication and Supply Challenges

- National shortage of EMS medications
- Need federal leadership to address market failures

Earmark Requests

- **Adapt to new 2025 congressional map**
- **Criteria-based request**
 - Projects that Wake County government needs – 7-year CIP
 - Fits in Appropriations Committee guidance
 - Federal agency rules and regulations
 - Alignment of project timing with availability of funds
 - Congressional districts
 - Photo op potential

Housing Affordability

- **Preserve, or increase, funding to block grants**
- **Expand federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program**
- **Make pilot programs permanent**
 - PRICE grant
 - Permanent Support Housing grants

EMS Medications and Supply Challenges

- **National shortages of emergency medications**
- **Unstable supply chain**
- **Constant formulary changes**
- **High costs**

Opportunity List - Federal

Advocacy work not guaranteed, but CMO staff have discretion to pursue if opportunity

- Policy and programs that complement Wake Transit plans
- Fire sprinkler incentives
- “Benefits cliffs”
- Admin and reporting relief
- Nationwide public health data tracking
- Well and septic regulation
- Water source long-term planning
- Early childhood education
- WIOA flexibility and upward mobility
- Veterans services
- *Broadband access and affordability, digital literacy*
- *Rights for persons with disabilities*

Next Steps

- **Staff requests Board endorsement of the Top 3 and Opportunity List**
- **Participate in NCACC Legislative Goals Conference later this week**
- **Staff will begin preparing materials for State Legislature's 2025 long session and the 119th Congress**



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Appendix: Approved Approach

Defining “Advocacy”

- **Sharing information with our County team, legislators and other stakeholders**
- **Leveraging partnerships**
 - NCACC
 - Other counties and municipalities
 - Professional groups, interest groups
- **Lobbying**

Wake's Advocacy Model

Manager's Office Role

- "Air traffic control"
- Identify legislation needing attention
- Coordinate staff analysis, identify partners
- Share information and Advise Board on policy
- Facilitate Board priority-setting

Lobbyist Role

- Advocate to legislators and legislative staff on Wake County's behalf
- Identify legislation needing attention
- Liaison to State, Federal agencies
- Advise Board on political and legislative matters

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1. General Guidance

- **The Board of Commissioners will pursue legislative advocacy that**
 - Preserves the Board's statutory authorities and discretion to set policy priorities for Wake County government.
 - Preserves the County's financial resources and tax base.
 - Maintains and enhances State funding for government services
 - Advances the Board's Strategic Plan initiatives.
 - Facilitates policy improvements that benefit Wake County government and residents
- **County Manager's Office staff have the Board's permission to advocate in support of this general guidance**
- **Applies to state and federal advocacy**

1. General Guidance

Staff and lobbyist assume this covers the following:

- **Oppose bills that would shrink tax base or present financial challenges**
- **Oppose bills that reduce the Board's options to regulate growth and development**
- **Sustain or increase funding for public schools and community colleges**
- **Sustain or increase funding for State-funded services in HHS and other departments**

2. Top Three Asks

- **Propose setting a Top 3 list for State asks, and a Top 3 list for Federal asks**
- **There is one bucket of political “capital” for Wake County**
- **Prioritizing...**
 - Concentrates the Board’s limited “capital” on highest needs
 - Gives our lobbyists a clear message to deliver
 - Allows CMO and lobbyist to reserve capacity for unforeseen needs
 - Easier for you and staff to explain
- **Staff recommend focusing on County government needs**

3. Opportunity List

- **Approve a list of policy issues that gives CMO and lobbyists discretion to act quickly when opportunity knocks.**
- **Capture policy items that did not make Top 3**
- **No advocacy is guaranteed, depends on what issues come up next year**
- **Board doesn't need to specify the outcome desired**