



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TODAY

## New Website Offers Data Tools and Connections

With the introduction of our new website earlier this month, Wilson Forward has created a more effective and efficient tool for our collaborative partners and our community. We are dedicated to improving the quality of life, educational opportunities, and workforce development, and our new format strengthens our ability to provide comprehensive and up to date information regarding local initiatives, community data, and leadership.

As we approach future opportunities, we will use the new website to support innovation, collaboration, and strategic solutions to community challenges.

## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS



### New Website Features...

- Enhanced data relevant to health and wellness, education, and workforce development
- Mobile friendly and improved functionality
- Improved platform and usability for organizational needs and future sustainability
- Clear communication of goals, actions, and outcomes for collaborative work



Explore the New Wilson Forward Website Here

## COVID-19 Impact on Mental Health

In late 2020, the Wilson Wellness Collaborative implemented a comprehensive campaign to increase awareness for local resources and to strengthen the understanding of the connection between mental and physical health. Isolation and stress have negatively impacted people's mental health and created additional barriers for people who already suffered with mental illness and substance misuse. In a recent study by the CDC, 40.9% of respondents reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition, including symptoms of anxiety disorder or depressive disorder, symptoms of a trauma or stressor related disorder due to the pandemic, or having started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19.\*



*Pictured Above: WWC Mental Health Awareness Campaign Logo*

Collaborating WWC members have prioritized an urgent focus on the mental health challenges imposed by COVID-19 and have partnered to connect the community with information and resources for supporting mental health. Communication platforms include social media, Wilson Times, and printed brochures. Several local partners have contributed articles to the Wilson Times, and these articles can be viewed using [this link](#). The printable flyer is available [here](#).

### Some Quick Facts About Mental Health in the United States\*

- 1 in 5 adults in America experience a mental illness.
- Approximately 10.2 million adults in America have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders.
- Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and is a major contributor to the global burden of disease.
- Serious mental illness costs America \$193.2 billion in lost earnings every year.
- 90% of those who die by suicide have an underlying mental illness. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S.
- Nearly 60% of adults and 50% of youth aged 8-15 didn't receive mental health services in the previous year.

\*Sources: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [National Alliance on Mental Health](#)

## Wilson Leadership Institute: Engaging and Retaining Young Talent

Debbie Aiken (Executive Director of Anonymous Trust) and Reginald Speight (District Director for the Office of Congressman G.K. Butterfield) met with the Wilson Leadership Institute this month and shared insight and experiences that have shaped their approach to leadership. Mr. Speight emphasized the importance of thoughtfully considering how messages can be received by different communities, especially in situations that might be unfamiliar. He also offered encouragement to work with community members towards common goals, even in the face of differing opinions and beliefs. Mrs. Aiken shared insights that she gained through her professional and personal journey, and she emphasized that the different points of the journey offered integral parts to her learning process. Mrs. Aiken advised that nothing we do in life is wasted if we choose to learn from the experience.



*Pictured Above: Debbie Aiken (Executive Director of Anonymous Trust) and Reginald Speight (District Director for the Office of Congressman G.K. Butterfield)*

With a passion for community development, the participants in WLI recognize the importance of attracting, retaining, and developing the talent that will be needed for the community's future workforce. The group is exploring ways to invest in transformative projects that will attract and retain a skilled workforce who want to live, work, play and grow in the Wilson community. Considering the changes we have experienced in the past year, we know some of the modifications to the way we live, work, and play could be long lasting. There has never been a better time to consider the approach our community takes to attract and retain a talented workforce. Before the overwhelming transition to remote work, it was estimated that approximately 50% of our local workforce commuted from communities outside of Wilson. The Wilson Leadership Institute is considering ways to leverage community assets to establish a place where future workers and leaders choose to live and work. Considerations could include: cultural arts, civic engagement, leadership opportunities, inclusivity. Research is underway, and data collection will include interviews and surveys throughout the community. The 2020-2021 cohort will present their findings and recommendations in the 2021 Annual Meeting of Wilson Forward.

READ MORE ABOUT THE WILSON LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

## RECONNECT DIFFERENTLY

Every donor, every dollar, and every act of generosity makes a difference!



Wilson Forward has served the Wilson community since 2007, and our work has never been more important. Even in this challenging environment, we are building and supporting connections between people, organizations, opportunities, and resources to improve education, health and wellness, and workforce development. We stand united as a community of partners who always demonstrate resilience and support for each other.

Every single contribution can have an impact on the future of our work. As you consider your philanthropic priorities for this year, we hope you will make Wilson Forward one of those priorities with a personal and meaningful gift as a part of our Annual Campaign.

CONTRIBUTE TODAY!

## COMMUNITY PARTNER EVENTS

Upcoming Community Partner Events & Programs

**WILSON HAS MY WORD CAMPAIGN**

WE'RE GIVING *Our Word* TO KEEP WILSON STRONG & SAFE

WILSON HAS MY WORD is our commitment to keeping Wilson strong and safe. Together, we can keep our customers, friends, family and neighbors safe while keeping our economy strong.

Wear a mask and please don't touch your face or your eyes.  
Stay six feet apart from anyone outside your household.  
Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.

Thank You FOR DOING YOUR PART! LEARN MORE AT [WWW.THEWILSONWORD.COM](http://WWW.THEWILSONWORD.COM)

**AREA L AHCC ACES WEBINAR**

Save the date!

**ACES & Addictive Disease: The BIG Picture!**

**LIFE**

Thursday, May 20, 2021  
Live Webinar Featuring:

**Hyden Lock MD**  
Dr. Lock has been practicing medicine for over 20 years. He is a board certified addiction medicine physician and has been made a life member of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). He is also a past president of the North Carolina Society of Addiction Medicine (NCSAM). He has been a speaker at numerous national and international conferences and has published articles in the field of addiction medicine.

**Regina L. Connolly, MSW, LICSW**  
Regina is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and has been practicing for over 15 years. She is currently working at the Wilson Community Center where she provides individual and group therapy to clients with a variety of mental health concerns. She is also a frequent speaker at community events and has published articles on mental health issues.

**Shea Frank, Ph.D., Senior Counselor at N.C. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Dr. Frank is a Senior Counselor at the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. He has been working in the field of addiction medicine for over 20 years and has been a frequent speaker at national and international conferences. He is also a past president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM).

**Joan Truitt, MPH, Chief Research and Development Officer for the Wilson Leadership Institute**  
Joan is the Chief Research and Development Officer for the Wilson Leadership Institute. She has been working in the field of community development for over 15 years and has been a frequent speaker at national and international conferences. She is also a past president of the American Society of Community Development (ASCD).

**Scott Longman, MSW, LICSW**  
Scott is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and has been practicing for over 15 years. He is currently working at the Wilson Community Center where he provides individual and group therapy to clients with a variety of mental health concerns. He is also a frequent speaker at community events and has published articles on mental health issues.

**WILSON ARTS EVENTS**

WILSON ARTS CREATIVE KIDS VISUAL ARTS & COMIC ART CLASSES

silver linings march 18 - april 29 a group exhibition of works created during the pandemic

CAMP IT UP AT WILSON ARTS!

Spring Break Paper Mache Camp Now Enrolling!

**WILSON COUNTY HEALTHY FOOD ASSET MAPPING CONVENING**

WILSON VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT SESSION 2021 FOR THE HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS MAPPING PROJECT

Goals/Objectives: The Food Project

Wilson County Executive Link: <https://bit.ly/3k4K1xU>

March 9 10:30 AM

Contact for any questions: Charles B. Williams, HI-FAM Community Engagement Facilitator, [ce@abc2inc.org](mailto:ce@abc2inc.org)

**FREEMAN ROUND HOUSE & AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM'S VIRTUAL EXHIBITS**

OLIVER NESTUS FREEMAN ROUND HOUSE AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSEUM

1202 Nash Street East  
Wilson, North Carolina 27893

Click for Virtual Museum Tour

**WILSON RIDE PROGRAM OFFERING FREE VACCINE TRANSPORTATION**

RIDE Powered by QVVO

Service hours: Monday through Friday, 9am - 5pm

How to RIDE: 1. Check an account. 2. Request a ride. 3. Wait for the ride. 4. Get to the destination.

Service area: Wilson County, North Carolina

Meet your driver: Drivers are trained and licensed professionals who will provide you with a safe and comfortable ride.

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Please contact us with any questions or inquiries

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[Ccochran@WilsonForward.org](mailto:Ccochran@WilsonForward.org)



Connect with us through the links below!

