



# NC East Alliance - Our Team of Teams

## **Strategic Initiative Team (SIT)**

This team was officially launched in August 2024 and is the tie that binds all five of our Regional Initiatives together and brings cohesion of effort to the table.

This team will support our activities with hard data points. It will analyze the viability of new ideas from others, outside of our core teams. The SIT team will generate our own new ideas for leadership's consideration. This team will also pursue multiple-county, multiple-year, high impact grants for the benefit of our Regional Partners. This team will always pursue efficiency and efficacy, in their own work, and help to promote those same values with all five of our focused Initiatives. This team will assist our initiatives in seeking self-sustaining program options for the long-term strength and sustainability of the overall efforts of the NC East Alliance.

## **Economic Development Initiative**

This program was newly relaunched and refocused in June 2024 with the hiring of Donna Phillips, MBA as the Vice President of Economic Development. Donna is working with the NC East Alliance Team and exploring ways of reinventing what Economic Development looks like for Rural Eastern NC. A sampling of some of that work is as follows:

1. Our counties are asking for support as some have limited staff resources. We are collecting a comprehensive inventory of assets in the region while working with the counties on assisting with recruitment and expansion projects.
2. We plan to do pilot "Industry Engagement Agreement" projects with offerings that meet industry specific needs and then assess how to scale for broader application. These are custom legal agreements between industries and schools for focused workforce development efforts.
3. Will lead and include county/state/federal allies on large infrastructure projects like the continued expansion of I-87.
4. Putting stronger emphasis on the needs of our Industry Clusters and working to collaborate with allies and industry partners to grow these sectors.

### **Connect with Donna Phillips**

Have questions or ideas? Donna would love to hear from you at [phillips@nceast.org](mailto:phillips@nceast.org), (252) 814-3657



## **Community Development Initiative**

The NC East Alliance launched the Community Development Initiative in January 2025, introducing a dynamic approach to fostering growth across the 29 counties we serve. Led by Bianca Shoneman, our new Vice President of Community Development, this initiative focuses on innovative strategies, collaboration, and tailored solutions to empower communities and maximize regional potential.

### **How We're Getting Started:**

#### **1. Listening to Communities**

Bianca is eager to visit your community, hear your stories, and understand your unique needs to shape our support and collaboration.

#### **2. Building Working Alliances**

We're forging partnerships to provide:

- Actionable data for retail and industry recruitment.
- NC East Alliance grant funds.
- Regional funding from federal, foundation, and private sources to address multi-county challenges.

#### **3. Phased Engagement**

We will engage communities in strategic phases:

- **Phase 1:** Beginning February 2025, focusing on ten persistent poverty counties.
- **Phase 2:** Starting Q3 2025, addressing the next tier of counties based on economic distress.

#### **4. Empowering Lost and Hidden Talent**

We're preparing a future Talent Initiative to support Opportunity Youth, transitioning military personnel, formerly incarcerated individuals, migrant workers, and other overlooked talent pools. This initiative marks a bold step forward for the NC East Alliance, creating transformative, lasting impact.

### **Connect with Bianca Shoneman**

Have questions or ideas? Bianca would love to hear from you at [shoneman@nceast.org](mailto:shoneman@nceast.org), (252) 402-6888



## **Marketing Initiative**

The Marketing team headed up by our Chief Information Officer, Trey Goodson. Trey is working to step up our visibility, and to put our best foot forward throughout the Region and beyond. A sample of the coming work is as follows:

1. Market the activities and success of each of our Five Initiatives as they stand up and become more robust.
2. The Marketing Team is working to connect all our Citizens to the best that Eastern NC has to offer. This includes current behind the scenes work to update the current website with new information about NC East Alliance and eastern North Carolina. There will be an emphasis on creating and providing beneficial resources to all stakeholders in eastern NC.
3. Our Marketing Team will be working to highlight the incredible opportunities within local industries and showcasing the pathways to those opportunities. One example is East Rising on WTIB with plans to utilize other outlets in the Future.
4. Our Marketing Team is on the cusp of rolling out big plans to tell the good news of our Region well beyond our borders, through outlets like Our State, Business NC, and many others.
5. We are developing a comprehensive Marketing and Branding Initiative that let the citizens of Eastern NC, and the World beyond, know that we that we live in the best region of the world with an abundance of opportunity. The outdoors, affordability, history, and people are what make eastern NC so special, and we will work to showcase that.

### **Connect with Trey Goodson**

Is there a place, person, or business that you think deserves more attention in eastern NC? Reach out to Trey and let him know what you think should be highlighted in the region! **Contact Trey at [goodson@nceast.org](mailto:goodson@nceast.org), (252) 814-0484.**